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LEO BAECK COLLEGE

**THE THEME OF REDEMPTION
IN MIDRASH TEHILLIM
AS REFLECTED IN ITS MESHALIM**

By

drs. Jerphasina Jacoba Buitelaar

A thesis submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Religious Studies

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Abstract

This thesis investigates whether or not an overall unity can be detected in Midrash Tehillim. The present dissertation will argue that there is a unity and coherence in Midrash Tehillim that transcends its discrete pericopes, however these are defined. This coherence takes place in a number of ways. Midrash Tehillim is a lemmatic commentary on the book of Psalms and it follows the sequence, topics and argument of the Psalms. The unity of Midrash Tehillim is also evident at a linguistic level. It is in Rabbinic Hebrew, with some intermingling of Jewish Aramaic. On a third level unity is found in the exegetical techniques of Midrash Tehillim. Also the limited repertory of themes, namely the figure of David, the Temple, including its destruction, and redemption provide unity. It is redemption that is the most characteristic theme of Midrash Tehillim. Finally Midrash Tehillim is unified by the use of a number of literary structures which permeate the work. Two literary structures stand out, namely the Petichah and the Mashal. These Meshalim are particularly artfully composed and a number of them are thematically linked to the redemption. The analysis of the Meshalim of Redemption in Midrash Tehillim has been contextualized in a variety of ways – in terms of previous scholarly work on Midrash, in terms of the state of the text as found in the manuscripts and in terms of the relationship of Midrash Tehillim to other Midrashim.

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1 The Research Question

1.1 The unity of Midrash Tehillim

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate whether or not an overall unity can be detected in Midrash Tehillim. Is it a somewhat random anthology or aggregate of comments, drawn possibly from diverse sources, unified structurally only by the underlying biblical text which it follows sequentially, or does it have an overarching structure and argument which transcends the individual comments?

This topic has not been much discussed hitherto. Two contradictory tendencies have been manifest in scholarship on the Rabbinic Midrashim. On the one hand casual assumptions have been made about the nature of these works as authored texts. That is to say they have been treated as though they were bounded and finished works which left the hand of an 'author' at some precise point in time, and thereafter circulated as more or less fixed texts. On this basis scholars have talked about their intertextual relationship in terms of borrowings, and influences: so Song of Songs Rabbah can be said to have made use of Mechilta de Rabbi Ishmael, one fixed text of another¹. There are assumptions here about the literary character of these works, and indeed more generally about text-production and transmission, which are highly questionable in the world of late antiquity, but they need not concern us here. Suffice to note that from this standpoint scholarship tends to treat the Midrashim as unified, bounded texts. On the other hand, when scholars turn to examine the content of these works they have tended to treat them atomistically – to focus on individual units of exposition and their meaning in isolation – and not to look for an overarching structure or argument, aside from the underlying unity imposed by the base text. And how such a unity might be discovered – how the coherence of a document such as Midrash Tehillim might be demonstrated – has not been much discussed either.

The one very notable exception to this general rule has been Jacob Neusner. Jacob Neusner has argued at length with regard to earlier Midrashim that they are more tightly constructed works than was previously supposed². He tried to demonstrate that many of the so-called Tannaitic Midrashim have a topical and/or programmatic unity which conveys a consistent message: they should be seen as worked out documents, and not simply be treated as collections of discrete and sometimes contradictory comments on individual verses. He conceded that this is not always the case. He failed, for example, to detect any overarching topical or programmatic unity in the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, and so classified it as a midrashic encyclopaedia. But this exceptional case, far from falsifying his basic premise, actually, he would argue, supports it, in that it shows that his analytical techniques will not automatically yield the same result. If they did – if unity was discovered in every text – we might with justification be suspicious about the method. But some Midrashim resist all attempts to discover any kind of strong unity in them, and this is re-assuring.

Neusner did not treat Midrash Tehillim, but the questions which he raised can be posed to this Midrash as well. The present dissertation will argue that there is a unity and

¹ See Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, Edinburgh, 1996, p. 315.

² Neusner's method will be further discussed in 2.3.

coherence in Midrash Tehillim that transcends its discrete pericopes, however these are defined. That coherence is demonstrated in a number of ways.

(1) At the very basic level the work is unified by the fact that it is a commentary on a base text, in this case the biblical book of Psalms. Midrash Tehillim demonstrates its dependence upon its base text by taking the form of a lemmatic commentary on it. What this means is that it explicitly follows the sequence, topics and argument of the base text. It accepts the agenda of the base text. It did not have to follow this procedure: it could have adopted more free-flowing styles of commentary which would not have followed the biblical order so slavishly, but it has chosen a mode of presentation which foregrounds its subordination to another text. Not every verse in that text is commented upon, but large portions of it are, and in the sequence of the base text. If the readers know the base text, which Midrash Tehillim presupposes they do, then they can to a high degree predict what the Midrash will deal with, and they can know when it has come to an end, namely when it has dealt with the last Psalm³. The unity imposed by the base-text in this case is hardly a strong unity, and is compatible with a mere aggregation of discrete thematic units and comments. It is precisely because the agenda of the Midrash is, on the face of it, so strongly set by the base text, that scholars have not sought for its own intrinsic unity. But as Jacob Neusner has argued, the subordination of Midrash to Scripture can be deeply misleading. He may be going too far to argue that although Scripture structures everything it dictates nothing, but there can be no question that the hermeneutical procedures adopted by the darshanim enabled them to escape the suffocating embrace of Scripture and from time to time impose their own agenda on it, and this opens up the possibility that a lemmatic Midrash can be the vehicle for a coherent point of view that can be read in against the grain of the base text. This coherence imposed on Midrash Tehillim by the fact that it is a comprehensive commentary on the biblical Book of Psalms will be discussed at 6.1, but only briefly because what we are fundamentally concerned with is whether a deeper unity can be discerned beyond this.

(2) The unity of Midrash Tehillim is also evident at a linguistic level. It is in Rabbinic Hebrew, with some intermingling of Jewish Aramaic. In this respect it differs little from the other Midrashim. For example, Lamentations Rabbah, is linguistically of a similar type – a base text in Hebrew, with passages in Aramaic interspersed from time to time. It is a moot question to what extent the authorship of Midrash Tehillim and Midrash Lamentations Rabbah would have been conscious of a sharp distinction between Hebrew and Aramaic, and would have been aware that they were occasionally switching languages. They cannot have been insensitive to the difference between Hebrew and Aramaic. Aramaic was a language spoken in the streets and market-places: it was their vernacular. Hebrew was essentially a literary and liturgical language, though the possibility cannot be ruled out that it may have been occasionally used in the schools for discussion and discourse. The two languages, though closely cognate, are morphologically, syntactically and lexically, quite distinct, and this fact cannot have escaped notice. But for the purposes of a work such as Midrash Tehillim the differences between the two languages may not have meant much: like the Gemara

³ I will discuss below at 3.2.1 the problem that originally Midrash Tehillim may not have commented on Psalms 119-150.

of the Talmud they may have effectively fused into a unified means of expression. Linguistically, then, Midrash Tehillim is distinctive, but this distinctiveness is something it shares with other Midrashim. Language itself can seldom impose a strong unity, since it cannot dictate the substance of the work. The language of Midrash Tehillim will, however, be dealt with at 6.2 below.

(3) Unity is imposed on Midrash Tehillim also by its hermeneutical perspective, defined by the way in which it exegetes the biblical text. This perspective is, as was suggested above, important, because it allows the darshan to impose his own agenda on the base text, and to impose his own argument on his midrash, but of itself it cannot create a strong unity, but only opens the possibility for doing so. The exegetical techniques of Midrash Tehillim are those found in all the Rabbinic Midrashim. This perspective is, then, something which it shares with a number of other works: it is distinctive of a corpus of texts, but not of Midrash Tehillim itself. A brief treatment of the exegetical techniques of Midrash Tehillim can be found at 6.3 below.

(4) Unity can also be imposed by the reiteration of a limited repertory of themes. This thematic unity has been stressed by Neusner in his analysis of the Midrashim. This approach is of considerable use for the work in hand. But we can distinguish two types of themes here. The first type covers those which are characteristic of Rabbinic writings in general, because they form the fundamental theology of Rabbinic Judaism: God, the Torah, the mitsvot, the Covenant at Sinai, the election of Israel. These can all be found in Midrash Tehillim, but they can also be found in the other Rabbinic Midrashim as well, as Neusner's exhaustive topical analysis of these shows. Their presence simply defines Midrash Tehillim as a work that has emerged from a Rabbinic milieu. However, there are other themes which feature prominently in Midrash Tehillim, which, while found in other Rabbinic texts, are not universal. They form a counterpoint to the constant 'drone' of classical Rabbinism, and indicate a more nuanced theological perspective. Three of these are discussed below at 6.5, viz the figure of David (who easily enters the discourse as the author of some of the Psalms), the Temple, including its destruction, and redemption. All of these are discussed below. It is redemption that is the most characteristic theme of Midrash Tehillim, and which will require most attention, and it is a theme which treated at times with striking originality in comparison with the treatment in other Rabbinic writings. It is also a theme which is often explored (though not exclusively) in meshalim, which form an important literary-structural component of the work.

(5) Finally Midrash Tehillim is unified by the use of a number of literary structures which permeate the work. Here, as with thematic analysis, we should distinguish between the norm and the exception. The basic literary structure is lemma plus comment, but that is the fundamental structure of all Rabbinic Midrashim. Two other literary structures are more indicative – the Petichah and the Mashal. Both these are found, of course, in other Rabbinic Midrashim, but there are certain unusual characteristics of their use in Midrash Tehillim. Both will be discussed below at 6.4. Of these literary structures by far the most eye-catching and indicative are the Meshalim, not only because many of them are particularly artfully composed, but also because they are thematically linked: many of them, as has already been indicated, are about redemption. Distributed strategically throughout the work these striking and memorable Meshalim bind it together and drive home its basic message – the message of redemption. They turn the book of Psalms, against the odds, into a promise of divine

redemption, and Midrash Tehillim into a Midrash of Redemption. It is the meshalim, consequently, that demand and will receive the lion's share of our attention in this analysis of the unity of Midrash Tehillim: see 7-8 below.

1.2 Outline of the thesis

The analysis of the Meshalim of Redemption in Midrash Tehillim has to be contextualized in a variety of ways – in terms of previous scholarly work on Midrash, in terms of the state of the text as found in the manuscripts, in terms of the relationship of Midrash Tehillim to other Midrashim. The thesis proceeds as follows. In chapter 2 I discuss the major academic approaches to Midrash that have emerged in the past two hundred years, and situate my own approach in relation to them. This survey is not intended to be exhaustive, nor do I come down firmly exclusively in favour of a single approach. The complexity of Midrash cannot be encompassed by any single approach on its own: all the approaches have value and validity, and this points to a need for eclecticism.

Chapters 3-5 deal with some necessary prolegomena to any study of Midrash Tehillim. Chapter 3 is concerned with the text of the Midrash. This is vitally important. When we analyse a text, and above all when we consider the unity of a text, it is obvious that we should make clear exactly what text we are talking about. The text can be briefly defined as the text handed down to us by tradition, but in the case of a substantial segment of Rabbinic literature this text is highly unstable: different manuscripts contain different forms of the text. This problem affects, as we shall see, Midrash Tehillim in a major way, and it counsels against relying exclusively on printed editions. One of the major weaknesses of Neusner's analysis of the Midrashim, to which many critics drew attention, is that he simply worked off standard printed editions. Chapter 4 deals with the relationship between Midrash Tehillim and other Rabbinic texts, notably Yalqut Shim'oni, Aggadat Bere'shit, Pesiqta Rabbati, and Targum Psalms. Chapter 5 summarizes the scholarly discussion on the date, provenance and authorship of Midrash Tehillim.

Chapter 6 runs through the major elements in Midrash Tehillim which structure it as a unity, in line with the programme indicated above – the base-text, the language, the exegetical perspective, literary structures (Petichah and Mashal), and themes (the figure of David, the Temple and redemption). Chapter 7 contains the bulk of the thesis: it offers a detailed study of the Meshalim of Redemption in Midrash Tehillim. The presentation of each Mashal follows the same pattern: text, variants, translation, and commentary. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis with a synthesis of Midrash Tehillim's theology of redemption and sets this briefly in the context of theology of redemption as found in other Rabbinic writings. It attempts to argue the conclusion that Midrash Tehillim, taken as a whole, can be characterised as a Midrash of Redemption. Four appendices, contain material which, though of importance, cannot be slotted easily into the body of the dissertation.

2 Approaches to Midrash

During the last two centuries six main approaches to the study of Midrash can be detected. In previous times the study of Judaism had been mainly traditional and as a result critical editions had not been produced. With the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* a new way of dealing with the extensive Jewish literature began. These six main approaches can be broadly divided into two types. The formal type is interested in the hermeneutics at work in Midrash and explores how a certain exegesis was derived from Scripture. The techniques employed by the darshanim form the main subject of this type of study. To this type belong the tradition-historical approach, the hermeneutical middot approach, and to a lesser extent the formalist approach. The second type displays an interest in the result of the Midrashic processes: the text itself. Many questions are raised in order to understand what constitutes a certain Midrashic work. Each approach looks at the text from a different angle and at times combines multiple facets. Elements that are studied by this type are for example the development of the work over time, the structure and coherence of the text, the thematic agenda in the text, parallels etc. Each approach has its weaknesses and its strengths. Perhaps the emphasis on the new ideas that each approach wants to promote, has lead to an underexposure of other aspects which would be consistent with the approach.

2.1 Historical / philological approach

In 19th century Germany a group of Jewish intellectuals founded the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* i.e. the Science of Judaism and this movement is the origin of the historical / philological approach. The *Wissenschaft* proposed applying a modern scientific approach to the study of Judaism. The approach was not restricted to the Rabbinic literature, but it addressed the total of the Jewish culture including philosophy, liturgy, history and Biblical Studies. There are at least three elements that inspired the founders; first of all German society had been unfavourable towards Jewish culture and the younger Jewish generation had started to assimilate to German culture. The *Wissenschaft* wanted to counter this integration movement by promoting Judaism. The second element is closely connected to this and concerns the wish to spread the knowledge that would be gained through this new way of study among the Jewish community. The third motive was the aim to conform the study of Judaism to the intellectual standards of those days which might lead to its acceptance by the (European) outside world.

L. Zunz was the most renowned of the first generation⁴ of the *Wissenschaft* and his works include a pamphlet called *Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur* in which he laid down the foundation for a scientific programme for the Rabbinic literature. For our subject the *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*⁵ is of importance. In this book Zunz treated many aspects of Jewish teachings beginning with the Oral Torah and ending with

⁴ Only the first and second generation of the *Wissenschaft* will be treated here because these generations contributed the most to the study of Midrash Tehillim. The third generation produced the Jewish Encyclopaedia and at the beginning of the fourth generation the Hebrew University in Jerusalem was established.

⁵ Zunz, L., *Die Gottesdienstliche Vorträge der Juden*, Berlin, 1832.

preaching as customary in his time. Also the Midrashic works are described in accordance with the beliefs of the *Wissenschaft*. Great stress was put on the idea of development. Judaism and its literature had inevitably evolved over time. The task of the literary historian was to peel away the layers of development and to uncover the *Urtext*, the original form of the text with which the work had begun. There was a strong assumption that the tradition was 'accretive' i.e. it drew to itself new material, it 'grew' additional layers, and this led to the tendency to see the shorter texts as earlier and more original. Zunz was of the opinion that a literary work contained several strata, similar to what took place in the field of biblical studies where different layers such as 'Jahwist', 'Elohism', 'Deuteronomist', 'Priest' and Deutero-Isaiah to name a few were identified. A stratum is isolated by its philological features, mixed with several conjectures about what the general practice must have been. The oldest stratum is for the *Wissenschaft* without doubt the shortest and simplest version. Each stratum that has been discerned is linked to a time and place, following a strict chronological order. Zunz mainly discerned traits of lateness in Midrash Tehillim. He dated Midrash Tehillim to the ninth century and believed its composer lived under Muslim rule. Some of his conclusions are based on philological research, others are based on the presence of parallels, which Zunz nearly always favoured⁶. Unfortunately Zunz did not always pursue his own method of peeling away the layers. In the case of Midrash Tehillim Zunz takes quotes from for example the Babylonian Talmud at face value and uses them for dating a stratum. For a consistent application of this method, Zunz should have been peeling away layers in the Talmud as well. Other achievements of this first generation were the discovery and publication of many Hebrew manuscripts (S. D. Luzzatto), composing catalogues of the Hebrew manuscripts of inter alia the Bodleian Library of Oxford (M. Steinschneider) and the establishment of a Jewish Seminar (Breslau 1854).

During the years of the second generation of the *Wissenschaft* the first critical editions saw the light. These editions were based on the manuscripts and the early printed editions and often had introductions and a notes system. One of the scholars composing critical editions was S. Buber who went to great lengths to acquire copies of manuscripts and early printed editions and who accurately compared the literary evidence, retrieved parallels and listed loanwords. Among his work is the edition of Midrash Tehillim of 1891 which is still used as the standard edition⁷. Other fields in which the second generation of the *Wissenschaft* was active was historiography⁸, haggadah and philology⁹. Many studies were not only presented in books, but they were also published as articles in new periodicals such as the *Revue des Etudes Juives* and the Jewish Quarterly Review.

⁶ Further information on Zunz can be found in the section on the date, origin and author of Midrash Tehillim.

⁷ Buber, S., Midrash Tehillim, Wilna, 1891. For more on this edition see 3.2.2.2.

⁸ Grätz, H., *Volkstümliche Geschichte der Juden*, Leipzig, 1853-1870.

⁹ Bacher, W., *Die exegetische Terminologie der jüdischen Traditionsliteratur*, 2 Vols, Darmstadt, 1965 (reprint of 1899)

2.2 Tradition - historical approach

The historical, philological approach to Midrash was the prevailing approach until the Second World War. Shortly after the War a new tradition-historical approach was developed by Renée Bloch. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Codex Neofiti I and the Cairo Geniza Fragments gave an impetus to the study of Midrash. The existence of this newly found material proved that there was not a void between the two Testaments and this material was considered to be the 'bridge' between Bible and Rabbinic Midrash. Bloch thought that in order to understand the real significance of a particular aggadah one should take into consideration what preceded it and what followed it and the newly discovered material came to play a role in this comparing activity. Or to put it in her own words, Bloch set out 'to determine... the development and the respective antiquity of traditions, the formation, the historical situation, and the interdependence of rabbinic writings'¹⁰. Next to the by then standard historical and philological criteria, Bloch discerned two other types of criteria; external and internal. This double comparison should overcome the problem of 'missing' early elements that are attested in late texts. The external criteria are formed by the Jewish hellenistic works, early translations of the Old Testament, early Jewish liturgy, the New Testament and the early Christian works that were inspired by Jewish thought. According to Bloch¹¹ Midrash has Biblical origins and the midrashic genre was in common use in the Persian period. Midrashic features can be detected in some parts of Chronicles, in prophetic texts such as Ezekiel 16, but also in the Writings. This is the reason why Bloch can argue that the internal criteria have to come from Rabbinic tradition itself and why one should begin with the Old Testament and its Palestinian translations. Bloch never came to fully prove the feasibility of her method and in his book *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* G. Vermes means 'to carry the test a stage further'.

Like Bloch, Vermes believed that the connection between Bible and Midrash was very strong. This becomes evident when he remarked that 'Since targumic and midrashic literature embodies ancient exegetical tradition, it provides a reliable basis for research into the mind of the last redactors of the Bible; into the significance, that is to say, of the final compilation of Scripture'¹². While both the targumim and the midrashic literature often take the Bible as point of departure, they are not to be qualified as 'plain exegesis'. On the contrary, midrashic literature in particular has a tendency to fill in the narrative lacunae of the Bible and it often reads ideas and concepts into the Bible. This phenomenon of eisegesis seems to have broadly been adopted in a later piece by Vermes¹³ where he speaks of 'pure' and 'applied' exegesis.

For Vermes the study of (early) Rabbinic literature is not intended to gain insight into a specific Rabbinic work, but it serves a higher goal, namely the search for the steps in the history of a tradition and in determining the *terminus ante quem* of a given

¹⁰ Bloch, R., 'Midrash' in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice*, Green, W.S., Missoula, 1978, p. 56.

¹¹ See note 10.

¹² Vermes, G., *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, 1961, Leiden, p. 176

¹³ Vermes, 'Bible and Midrash: Early Old Testament Exegesis.' in *Post Biblical Jewish Studies*, Leiden, 1975, p. 80.

tradition¹⁴. Vermes often makes use of works that have been successfully dated, for example Jubilees. It seems necessary, or at least very convenient, to have dated witnesses so that a firm point in the development of a tradition can be fixed. However, it almost seems a general rule that the younger the work, the harder it is to find convincing evidence of the date of its final redaction. The issues with geography and the multitudes of communities is also much more complicated in case of the younger works than in the older works, where Vermes discerned only two types of tradition: Palestinian or Greek. While the tradition-historical approach proved to be quite fruitful in examining the earliest works that belong to the midrashic and targumic genre, it is less suitable for later Midrashim. This restriction is also recognised by Bloch and Vermes, though their motive is not derived from the difficulties concerning date and origin, but originality. Bloch found the later literature less interesting which can be deduced from the following: 'the literature of medieval Judaism, despite its somewhat novel concerns and literary genres, remains above all a literature of elaboration and codification based for the most part on the heritage of the rabbinic tradition¹⁵'. Vermes states more or less the same, but has extended this vision to include much earlier works as well. He writes: 'From the second century onwards, the exegetical tendency was towards elaboration, codification, and compilation, but there was scarcely any new creation. Instead, biblical interpretations were collected and recorded in script, old and new, traditional and individual alike, for the benefit of future generations¹⁶'. This goes hand in hand with Vermes' strong tendency to antedate Rabbinic tradition and one of his working hypotheses is the following: 'unless there is a specific proof to the contrary, the haggadah of the Palestinian Targums is likely to antedate the outbreak of the second revolt in A.D. 132¹⁷'. Vermes prefers the Palestinian Targum and believes that it lies between the Hebrew Bible and the classic Midrashim, not only with regard to its characteristics, but also with regard to chronology.

For Vermes the term Midrash applies to almost all early Jewish exegesis and this definition should be narrowed down. Vermes' definition suggests a homogenous tradition, while there are differences in language, form and most importantly in *raison d'être*. A more limited definition would do more justice to the diverse manifestations of (early) Jewish exegesis.

2.3 Documentary approach

In Neusner's work three different phases can be discerned. First there is the traditional historical phase wherein he worked on biography, for example on Jochanan ben Zakkai. The second phase is marked by a more critical method that is employed to Rabbinic literature to assess the scattered biographical traditions concerning the major

¹⁴ In his early work Vermes seems to disregard the fact that a certain saying may be attributed to a certain Rabbi, in order to give it authority. This implies that one cannot assume that when a saying and a Rabbi are linked, it was indeed that Rabbi who at that particular moments made that statement. Naturally, one should be very careful with using such 'evidence' for dating a certain phase in the tradition.

¹⁵ Bloch, R., 'Midrash', p. 51.

¹⁶ Vermes, G., *Scripture*, p. 228.

¹⁷ Vermes, G., 'Bible and Midrash', p. 90.

Tannaim. The third phase concentrates on whole documents and the ultimate goal is to describe document by document the whole canon of Rabbinic Judaism¹⁸. In Neusner's view the document is equal to the *textus receptus*. What should be compared at the outset is whole document to whole document and only later on the constituent element of one document with the constituent element of another document and last of all the exegetical techniques or issues of one document with those of a second document.

Neusner advocates the view that 'we have to allow a document to speak for itself'¹⁹, and combines this with the fact that almost all of the Rabbinic literature has been transmitted anonymously. This is not so much the case because during the transmission the names of the authors got obliterated, but because it was a deliberate choice to present the document anonymously. As a result one cannot but revert to the document itself and try to understand what it is about and what it tries to convey. Neusner's program consists of three foci, namely rhetoric, logic and topic. When speaking of rhetoric Neusner refers to the 'recurrent modes or patterns of expression', logic is 'the principle that joins one sentence to the next in an intelligible proposition or syllogism and that imparts cogency and integrity to the document in each of its parts and as a whole' and topic is 'the program of systematic exposition of a limited number of themes'²⁰. If the document has a cogent character, one may conclude that there was 'an authorship, a collectivity that stands behind the exhibited consensus in this particular writing'²¹. The rhetoric investigation consists of form-analysis, 'aimed at identifying recurrent syntactic and other language patterns and assessing the proportion of the whole dominated by those patterns'²². In his research on Sifré to Deuteronomy, Neusner has in detail described and listed the types of forms that occur and also the four modes of thought²³ that are used are discussed and listed at length²⁴. He demonstrates that the authorship of Sifré to Deuteronomy preferred the propositional syllogistic mode of logic and concludes that it is not a commentary to Deuteronomy since it is too philosophical. Neusner's approach appealed to a number of students of Midrash, so that we may even speak of a Neusnerian school with scholars such as G.G. Porton, W.S. Green, R.S. Sarason and M. Jaffee.

¹⁸ Neusner, J. *The Integrity of Leviticus Rabbah. The Problem of Autonomy of a Rabbinic Document*, Chico, 1985, Neusner, *Comparative Midrash. The Plan and Program of Genesis and Leviticus Rabbah*, Atlanta, 1986 and *Midrash as Literature. The Primacy of Documentary Discourse*, Lanham- New York- London, 1987

¹⁹ Neusner, *Sifré to Deuteronomy. An Introduction to the Rhetorical, Logical and Topical Program*, Atlanta, 1987, preface p. 12.

²⁰ Neusner, Sifré, p. 5.

²¹ Idem, p. 7.

²² Idem, p. 12.

²³ Neusner discerns 4 types, whereof 3 are propositional namely the 1) Syllogism (philosophical, for example lists that prove the thesis) 2) Narrative (teleological, the story proves a point) 3) the use of a fixed analytical method (for example a set of questions that will finally bring out the point) 4) fixed association, which is exegetical, not propositional.

²⁴ The topical programme is not given much attention in the treated book.

2.4 Formalist approach

The formalist approach started with the work²⁵ of Professor Arnold Goldberg of Frankfurt and more recent advocates of this approach are D. Lenhard²⁶, A. Samely²⁷ and L. Teugels²⁸. Goldberg calls his method form-analysis and in his early work he made a sharp distinction between form-analysis and function-analysis. For Goldberg the objects of study were the structures and the rules that can be discerned in the Rabbinic texts. He herewith began to describe the forms of Rabbinic literature such as the homily, the mashal, the ma'aseh etc. For his study he would chose one form and try to define 'an ideal typical form of X'. In order to arrive at the ideal typical form, Goldberg examined many texts in which the form X occurred. For this purpose Rabbinic works were treated synchronically, which for this objective was the best way to deal with the text. Diachronic comparison, once the ideal typical form had been defined, was not entirely ruled out beforehand²⁹. At the start of this exploration, there is a general idea of what the ideal typical form of X would look like. This general idea can at all times be adjusted when new insights have been found. After careful study of text forms that have a common appearance, for example the homily, one can tell which traits are constant factors and which are variables. The outcome of the studies can help to sharpen the general idea and turn it into a definition of the ideal typical form. This kind of hermeneutic circular logic cannot be avoided since to our knowledge no clear-cut rules for the forms have been passed down³⁰.

In Goldberg's analysis three levels can be discerned. The lowest level is that of the smaller units such as the distinctive forms of the ma'aseh and the mashal, but also that of a dictum (logion) and midrash. The middle level emerges out of the combination of the basic forms of the lowest level. A homily may for example contain a dictum and ma'aseh. The highest level is that of the collection of middle level forms, such as a pisqa, though it does not have to be a collection of exactly the same forms. In the case of midrash Goldberg sees a difference between content and form. The form is the meta-linguistic element of a Midrash which is defined as discourse about literature. Midrash is indeed centered around the lemmas of the Hebrew Bible. The content is the second component. This object-linguistic discourse about 'the world around us' forms the content and technically speaking, one could separate form from content. On the other hand, form and content have been deliberately intertwined and a sharp distinction seems unnatural. Another distinction Goldberg makes is that of *Aussage*,

²⁵ Goldberg, A., 'Das Schiftauslegende Gleichnis im Midrasch' in *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* (FJB) 9, 1981 pages 1-90, 'Die funktionale Form Midrasch' in FJB 10, 1982, pages 1-45. Also 'Versuch über die hermeneutische Präposition und Struktur der Petiha' in FJB 8, 1980, pages 1-60 and 'Entwurf' see note 29.

²⁶ Lenhard, D., *Die Rabbinische Homilie. Ein formanalytische Index*, Frankfurt, 1998.

²⁷ Samely, A., *Forms of Rabbinic Literature and Thought. An Introduction*, Oxford, 2007, 'Between Scripture and its Rewording: Towards a Classification of Rabbinic Exegesis' in *Journal of Jewish Studies* (JJS) 42, 1991, pages 39-67 'An account of the rabbinic homily: Lenhard's form-analytical index' in JJS 53, 2002, pages 371-379.

²⁸ Teugels, L., *Midrasj in de bijbel of midrasj op de bijbel? Een exemplarische studie van de 'verloving van Rebekka' (Gn 24) in de bijbel en de rabbijnse midrasj*, Leuven, 1994

²⁹ Goldberg, A., 'Entwurf einer formanalytischen Methode für die Exegese der rabbinischen Traditionsliteratur' in FJB 5, 1977, p. 20.

³⁰ Perhaps they never existed in the first place.

that is the message of a 'citation', and *Bedeutung*, which is the meaning a 'citation' has within a larger composition. While the *Aussage* of a given form is always the same, the *Bedeutung* may change when elements are added or removed.

D. Lenhard has applied form-analysis on the many homilies that occur in five homiletical Midrashim³¹. She does not aim to define the ideal typical form, but instead speaks of a prototype. The positive effect of this different terminology is that form X in text A that does not contain all the elements and operations as defined in the ideal typical form is not immediately considered as a defective specimen. The prototype also allows for more than one form, such as mixed forms (*Mischformen*) and special forms (*Sonderforms*). In itself this can be regarded as a step forward in the terminology and understanding of a form, yet it can also become a disturbing factor when the boundaries to the number of possible mixed forms are not clearly set.

The third scholar in this field is A. Samely who seems not only interested in form-analysis, but also in the techniques the Rabbis employed. He adheres to Goldberg's concept of the ideal typical form and also introduces elements of the hermeneutical middot approach³² into the form-analysis. In his article 'Between Scripture and its Rewording' he discerns several textual levels, ranging from a letter to a larger unit, on which the exegetical technique takes place. He points out that a number of characteristics concerning this text are of importance; its position, often to be understood as sequence, its congruence with for example a similar wording elsewhere in Scripture, or on the other hand its difference with another Scriptural word. Also the number of times that reference is made to a point in Scripture³³ and the importance of the co-text, i.e. the text that is in close proximity of a textual unit or of a location and that influences the interpretation, are to be taken into account. Samely then analyses a few midrashic examples and shows that combinations between some of the elements mentioned above can be made. A large number of the exegetical operations Samely discusses belong to the middot, and he therewith extends the approach to these middot³⁴.

Due to the enormous amount of material that needs to be carefully analysed, the formalist approach is still in its infancy. It is still in the phase that texts need to be treated synchronously and its results of a diachronic comparison are yet to come.

³¹ Leviticus Rabbah, Deuteronomy Rabbah, Tanchuma (Buber), Pesiqta de Rav Kahana and Pesiqta Rabbati.

³² See 2.6.

³³ Samely calls such a reference to a point in Scripture a 'location', only the quoting of biblical words that appear as part of the midrashic text is called a quotation in Samely's terminology. For me both instances are referred to as quote, although the verse that is commented on, usually mentioned at the beginning of a unit in Midrash Tehillim, is called a lemma.

³⁴ The middot include a few characteristic forms, of which the mashal is the most striking. Other middot are not so much forms as they are exegetical techniques, such as the gematria which is basically an adding up.

2.5 Literary approach

Although the term suggests differently, there is not just one way to look at the literary aspects of a text. Several researchers, such as M.A. Fishbane³⁵, J.L. Kugel³⁶, P.S. Alexander³⁷ and J.L. Rubenstein³⁸, have developed their own approach. One thing they have in common is the fact that they treat a text as an artefact. Generally speaking the literary approach is interested in discovering what new aspects a text brings to light, how it does this and where the ideas to do so may have come from. A number of elements from general literary theory can be applied to the study of Rabbinic literature, although some modifications are necessary. One of the questions that needs to be asked is whether or not context should be involved and how the boundaries are defined. Can a different chapter still be used as context or should one narrow the context down to the chapter in which a text appears? Similarly for Scripture one can ask if a co-text is restricted to the verses that are directly before and after the quote, or can one also take into account a verse in a different chapter of that Biblical book or even elsewhere in Scripture? Should one search for intertexts³⁹ which may have influenced a certain explanation? Are these intertexts only to be sought in Rabbinic literature, or could one include for example Hellenistic literature? Yet another question is what kind of genres can be discerned. What kind of narrative techniques, such as point of view, monologues, dialogues etc. are applied and what conclusions can be drawn from that? The emphasis differs per researcher and the kind of questions that will be asked and answered are also dependent of the kind of text one is dealing with. In *Genesis Rabbah* one will find longer stories and there the narrative techniques can play an important role, while in a halachic text the kind of reasoning will be given more attention.

In his book 'In Potiphar's house' J. L. Kugel presents nine theses on how one could deal with early biblical exegesis. They are, at times given in abbreviated form:

1. 'Narrative expansions, whatever other motives and concerns may be evidenced in them, are *formally* a kind of biblical exegesis⁴⁰.' With this thesis Kugel stresses the fact that a certain expansion was not created to convey a certain theological statement, but that the biblical verse should have an element that can justify such an expansion.

³⁵ Fishbane, M.A., *Studies in Biblical magic: Origins, Uses and Transformations of Terminology and Literary Form*, Ann Arbor, reprint 1990. *The Exegetical Imagination of Jewish Thought and Theology*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1998. *The Garments of Torah. Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1992. *The Kiss of God, Spiritual and Mystical Death*, Seattle, 1994.

³⁶ Kugel, J.L., *In Potiphar's House. The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1984 and *The Ladder of Jacob. Ancient Interpretations of the Biblical Story of Jacob and His Children*, Princeton 2006.

³⁷ Alexander, P.S., 'Bavli Berakhot 55a-57b: The Talmudic Dreambook in Context', in *JJS* 46, 1995, pages 230-248. *The Targum of Canticles. Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes*, Collegeville (Minnesota), 2004 and the yet to be published article 'The Rabbis and Messianism', 2007

³⁸ Rubenstein, J.L., *Context and Genre: Elements of a Literary Approach to the Rabbinic Narrative*, <http://as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/2597/RubensteinContextGenre.pdf>. *Talmudic Stories: Narrative Art, Composition and Culture*, Baltimore, 2003.

³⁹ Boyarin, D., *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994.

⁴⁰ Kugel, *Potifar*, p. 251

2. 'The study of midrashic motifs is thus first an exercise in "reverse-engineering" in which, therefore, certain standard questions ought repeatedly to be asked'. 'The reverse-engineering question *par excellence* is: Would an exegete, faced with problem X in the biblical text, be likely to create *ex nihilo* solution Y? If not, then solution Y probably already existed as the answer to some entirely different problem, or in some other way came to be "borrowed" by the exegete and recycled as an answer, or part of an answer, to problem X⁴¹.'
3. 'Exegetical motifs generally arise out of only one focus or site, usually a troubling or suggestive word or phrase within a specific verse. Only later, in a given narrative expansion, will the motif be made out to be addressing two or more verses simultaneously, often verses at some remove from one another.⁴²' This also happens with back-referencing which is 'the practice of reading verses from such books as Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the Song of Song, and Ecclesiastes as if they referred to people or events set forth in the historical narratives of the Hebrew Bible, and in particular in the Pentateuch⁴³'.
4. 'Exegetical motifs travel.' This is especially the case in doublets.
5. 'Motifs, and individual elements belonging to them, often become combined or harmonized with other motifs⁴⁴.' This is the most common kind of a travelling motif. Overkill occurs if a combination yields too many elements that are not that easily understood in the light of the biblical verse commented on.
6. 'One exegetical motif can influence the creation or development of another⁴⁵.'
7. 'Our earlier exegetical sources tend to be concerned with relatively simple or obvious exegetical problems, whereas later texts tend to raise less obvious questions and/or to answer them in a more sophisticated and involved fashion. This observation has a corollary, namely: the more obvious the problem raised by a biblical text, the likelier it is that there exists a very ancient motif to answer it⁴⁶.'
8. 'As compared to other early exegetical sources, rabbinic texts have a striking interest in connecting one biblical text or problem to another at some remove from the first. This interest might be said to reflect the overall 'canonizing' concern of rabbinic exegesis⁴⁷.' Two examples that Kugel mentions as illustration of this thesis are the petichah and again back-referencing.
9. 'Early exegetical documents of various sorts seem to argue, by their very form as well as by the overwhelming store of exegetical motifs shared among them...that there existed well before the common era a substantial body of standard

⁴¹ Idem, p. 252.

⁴² Idem, p. 253.

⁴³ Idem, p. 271.

⁴⁴ Idem, p. 256.

⁴⁵ Idem, p. 257.

⁴⁶ Idem, p. 259.

⁴⁷ Idem, p. 261.

explanations of various problems and peculiarities in the biblical text. These explanations were apparently not gathered and passed down in written form...they were passed on orally⁴⁸.

His ideas are certainly interesting, but they are mainly applicable to Midrashim that comment on Biblical narratives. It seems that in these kinds of Midrashim it is more likely that motifs will be spun out and that longer expansions will be present. The concepts of reverse-engineering, back-referencing and overkill are applicable to Midrash Tehillim. In every mashal and petichah reverse-engineering has taken place. Also back-referencing occurs in Midrash Tehillim, see for example passages 12 through 15 to Psalm 1 that all apply this technique. Overkill can be used as a criterium for further research into the motifs of a passage.

2.6 The hermeneutical middot approach

Isaak Heinemann's דרכי האגדה, Methods of Aggadah, that was published in 1954, is partly a reaction to the Haskalah⁴⁹. He thought it was unnecessary to defend the aggadah, for it had every reason to exist. For Heinemann it was out of the question to impose idealistic motives upon the study of aggadah and he set out to treat the material *sine ira et studio*⁵⁰. In order to do this one should acquire knowledge concerning the way of thinking of the Rabbis, concerning the character of the secondary material the Rabbis had and one should know the literary characteristics of the majority of Midrashim. According to Heinemann the Rabbis had an organic way of thinking. With this he means that the Rabbis did not have a method for expounding and in this 'they resembled the natural peoples'⁵¹. Elements of time were not well preserved and one cannot find leaps in the material because of continuous renewal. For Heinemann the development of literary material took place in pretty much the same way as that of the Greeks, which is why a comparison to the Hellenistic literature is made in the book. Unlike our present culture that is centered around the ego, the world of the Rabbis was dominated by collectivity. All the ranks and ages of the people were somehow addressed and it was in this atmosphere that there was room for non-historical historiography and for non-philological philology. The material that was available to the Rabbis consisted of Scripture which was used extensively. Yet also other material was available, for example the Mishnah that formed the basis of the Talmudim.

The two main ideas that are presented in Heinemann's book are of the היסטוריוגרפיה (creative historiography) and the הפילולוגיה היוצרת (creative philology). This is in line with what he called earlier the non-historical historiography and for non-philological philology. Both terms seek to explain what kind of processes are performed to arrive at a certain explanation. They are non-exclusive and both kinds of exegetical operation may be found in one single derasha

⁴⁸ Idem, p. 266.

⁴⁹ This is the term Heinemann uses. I would think, considering the names he mentions in connection with the Haskalah as well as the comments he makes, that he refers to the *Wissenschaft*.

⁵⁰ Tacitus, *Annales* I.1.

⁵¹ Heinemann, *Darkhei*, p. 8.

Yonah Fraenkel is the second representative of this approach. His main work is the *דרכי האגדה והמדרש*, Methods of Aggadah and Midrash⁵². Also for Fraenkel the hermeneutical process is of utmost importance.

2.7 The approach employed in this thesis

2.7.1 An eclectic approach

The approach that will be used in this thesis is in fact a combination of several elements taken from the approaches described above. The reason for this is twofold. Some approaches tend to focus so much on one point that other points are somewhat underexposed. In combining these approaches a new balance can be created. The second reason is that not every approach can be applied to Midrash Tehillim. It is, for example, quite hard to deal with it in the way Kugel treated texts. The Psalms are quite different from for example Genesis and this is reflected in their exegesis⁵³. Not only are the narratives of Genesis usually of considerable length so that we have a running story, but it is also the place where one would expect expansions. The genre one finds in the Book of Psalms is not very suitable for 'filling in the gaps' and it is not surprising that other types of linking to the Biblical verses are sought.

The historical-philological approach expresses the belief in an *Urtext*, the basic stratum. This idea is difficult, if not impossible, to defend. As in Biblical studies the existence of such a *Urtext* has never been demonstrated. I think the term can be applied in a less literal way, namely in the sense of collection(s) of material which already circulated before they were written down. Also the assumption that a more elaborate version is by definition later is difficult to prove. In my view this does not recognize the freedom a darshan had. It is well possible that a darshan opted for a shorter version if that was justified by the goal he wanted to reach. The tradition-historical approach tends to isolate small pieces of texts and to submit them to comparison, which may lead to an overlooking of the context wherein a certain derasha is found. There is the risk that in the search for the history of a tradition, the dynamics and coherence of a text are disregarded. Secondly, as Bloch and Vermes testified themselves, it is quite difficult to use this method for works that are probably quite late. Midrash Tehillim certainly belongs to the later Midrashim, many of which have also not been dated⁵⁴. This implies that a major prerequisite of this approach, namely the exact data about time and place of composition, is absent in the case of Midrash Tehillim.

The documentary approach is concentrating on the interior logic of a Midrashic text, and by doing so the role of Scripture in Midrash is de-emphasized. Neusner overstates the extent to which Midrash imposes upon and manipulates Scripture. To a certain

⁵² Clearly an allusion to Heinemann's work. It appeared in Jerusalem, 1991.

⁵³ In his book *Potiphar* Kugel does give an analysis of Psalm 137, but this Psalm has a narrative character and secondly, it does not belong to the main part of Midrash Tehillim, see chapter 03.2.1.

⁵⁴ The comparison may even be more complicated because, as we will see, the manuscripts of Midrash Tehillim can be largely divided into three families. These manuscripts should certainly be included if one would attempt to include Midrash Tehillim in a tradition-historical study.

degree manipulation, or rather selection, can take place when it comes to choosing which verses will be commented on. One does indeed see that these verses are subjected to a particular exegetical inquiry, but it would be an overstatement to argue that the manipulation is so strong that Scripture has hardly any influence at all. It is surely more reasonable to see a subtle dialectic at work between exegesis and eisegesis. This approach also has no interest in the manuscripts of a text. For Neusner the end result, as laid down in an edition, is often a solid enough basis for his method because he is only interested in the work of the authorship. Other fields that hardly receive attention from this method are detailed exegesis, which is vital for understanding the meaning of a unit, the traditional discipline of philology and in the hermeneutics of Midrash. Apart from Neusner's deliberate neglect of the manuscripts, his method is not suitable for Midrash Tehillim because its forms cannot be limited to a few main forms. When Neusner dealt with the Sifra and the Sifrés it was precisely the limited number of forms that was used in these texts that made him argue for the existence of authorships that were responsible for the final redaction of these documents. Midrash Tehillim is also not a philosophical work, but a commentary, so the search for cogency in the logic that is employed would probably not yield much result.

The last to be mentioned is the hermeneutical middot approach that has two weaknesses. Firstly there is the issue of the use of context. Fraenkel advocates the isolation of a text, which results in the idea that the end of a story should relate to the beginning. As J.L. Rubenstein⁵⁵ demonstrates this may lead to conjectures which may turn out to be less convincing than explanations derived from the context. Secondly the middot that form a part of this approach are surrounded by a few problems. Although I myself will indicate which middot are employed in Midrash Tehillim in 6.3, I must stress the fact that one should be cautious with these middot. First of all, the middot are attributed to the early authorities while in fact they should be dated much later. Secondly the rules themselves appear under more than one formulation which does affect their meaning. Thirdly the middot in the form they have been transmitted, seem to be abbreviated and their exact meaning is therefore not always known.

The question then remains how Midrash Tehillim can be studied. Above I argued that two types of approach could be discerned; one type is interested in the process and the other is interested in the text as artefact. I propose to combine these two types. For a Midrash that is not well known, I believe this can be argued for any text, it is desirable to obtain at least a general idea of what the characteristics of that particular text are and where its issues and interests lie. This implies that both the content and the structure need to be further explored. A careful reading of the text will among others show if a certain selection of the verses that are treated has been made or not. It will also show if the explanations are close to the biblical text or if other themes play a role and if there are other themes, which ones stand out? Such a careful reading will also provide an insight into the forms that are used. Here one should ask which forms are used and if some forms can be linked to a certain content, for example a *petichah* that serves as vessel for a less literal explanation. Once insight on the level of content as well as that

⁵⁵ 'Context and Genre', p. 4.

of structure has been gained, the investigation can be deepened. It is here that the synergy between form-analysis and the literary approach comes to life.

What constitutes 'the text' is of course a different question and I think we should opt for a pragmatic solution. The first requirement is that 'the text' should be accessible and the logical option is to use today's standard editions. In this respect I agree with Neusner that the *textus receptus* is useful, but I do not think that we should stop here. The manuscripts have to be taken into consideration because they often suggest that a work was still fluid and this too needs to be investigated simply because there may have been no 'end result' yet. In many cases a so-called *Urtext* cannot be reconstructed from the manuscripts, most likely because there has never been such a 'document' from which all the manuscripts stem⁵⁶.

The last part of the kind of research I propose addresses the existence of parallels. There are two ways the study of parallels can be enlightening. Once it has been established what the text that was the primary object of study seeks to say, the parallels can be brought in to find out what they have in common and what kind of differences there are. In a second stage can be determined what the relationship between these texts is and if there is a dependency between them.

2.7.2 Procedure

My research consists of several steps. In section 2.7.1, I explained that insight into the inner dynamics and the structures of a text are essential. The results of the careful reading of Midrash Tehillim are presented in chapter 6. Special attention is given to the form and function of the mashal because all of the selected derashot contain meshalim. In chapter 7 a detailed analysis of these derashot will be presented. Each section begins with the Hebrew text that is based on Buber's edition. The lemma is quoted first, followed by the explanation. If deemed necessary, this text may have undergone some modifications. Any of the modifications made to the Hebrew will also be reflected in the English translation. At times biblical quotes have been expanded to include the words that form the crux of the explanation. These additional words are put in brackets. After the Hebrew text a critical apparatus follows which provides background information that is based on the manuscripts. This information includes additional quotes as found in the manuscripts: it indicates when and where material is absent and it mentions the witnesses. Buber took Parma 1232 as his core text. In order to see if Buber has made any modifications to Parma 1232 or that he indeed copied it word for word Parma will be compared to Buber's version. In his introduction⁵⁷ Buber suggested that the eight main manuscripts can be divided into three families. When comparing the manuscripts attention will be paid to the

⁵⁶ For a detailed discussion of this problem, see Schäfer, P., 'Research into Rabbinic Literature: An Attempt to Define the Status Quaestionis' in *JJS* 37 (2), 1986, pages 139-152 and Milikowsky, C., 'The Status Quaestionis of Research in Rabbinic Literature' in *JJS* 39, 1988, pages 201-211 and the response by Schäfer 'Once again the Status Quaestionis of Research in Rabbinic Literature: An Answer to Chaim Milikowsky', in *JJS* 40, 1989, pages 89-94.

⁵⁷ *Midrash Tehillim*, reprint 1979 (Wilna 1891), pages 81-88

similarities and differences and Buber's theory will be verified. The comparison is also important to gain insight into the characteristics of the Buber edition. Perhaps there would have been a considerably different edition if Buber had used another manuscript as core text. In section 3.3.2 the outcome of the survey on the manuscripts in relation to Buber's manuscript family theory will be presented.

The darshan wanted his audience, be it a 'live audience' or readers, to arrive at a certain conclusion or opinion about the verse commented on. In the comment an insight into the tools that have been employed and steps that have been taken is provided. Special attention will be paid to the way the mashal has been built up. The quotes or biblical figures that are mentioned always serve a certain purpose, which will be tracked down. The kind of message the mashal wants to convey will also be subject of this section.

For each passage will be checked if there are parallels either within Midrash Tehillim or in other Rabbinic Texts. Only those parallels that have enough elements in common will be considered for comparison. For example a parallel that comments on the same verse, but has other than the verse no similarities with the passage in Midrash Tehillim will not be examined. The parallels that meet these requirements will be presented in Hebrew and if their content or wording differs a translation in English will be provided. In each case will be determined on what points Midrash Tehillim and the parallel(s) differ and where they concur. Insight into these differences is crucial for ascertaining the extent to which Midrash Tehillim has its own course and if it contains passages that are significantly different. If the latter is the case, it will be attempted to provide reasons for their distinctiveness. In the comparison of parallels some of the questions that are often raised concern dependence and age. It is difficult to be absolutely certain that one text depends on another text or that one text is clearly older than the other. Unless there are clear indications that one text is to be preferred, the comparison will be restricted to the content and message of the passages. Not every parasha has a parallel and it will be interesting to know which passages are only attested for by Midrash Tehillim. Part of the research will be to see if these unparalleled passages have a common factor. Insight into the unique passages will contribute to a better understanding of Midrash Tehillim. When the characteristics of the unique passages are taken together with the outcome of the comparison of the manuscripts, this may perhaps also lead to a better insight into the different versions of Midrash Tehillim.

At the end of this thesis a number of appendices can be found. Appendix A contains a mashal that is connected to the theme of redemption, but its nimshal is so short that it hard to make sense of it. In Appendix B the parallels will be presented and in Appendix C an overview of the Biblical quotes present in the selected derashot will be given. In Appendix D the bibliography can be found.

3 Text of Midrash Tehillim

3.1 Name of the Midrash

The most common name of the Midrash is nowadays 'Midrash Tehillim', but in the Yalkut Shim'oni and also in Buber's edition it is often called Shocher Tov, which are the first two words of Proverbs 11.27, the first biblical quote in the Midrash. Other names which are usually found in Medieval works ranging from the eleventh to the sixteenth century⁵⁸ are: Aggadat or Haggadat T(eh)illim. The printers of the Venice edition (1546) called it even Midrash Alfa Beta. Most likely they were inspired by Psalm 119 which is an alphabetic psalm. Its hundred and seventysix verses contain clusters of eight verses that all begin with the same letter and these clusters are ranged in alphabetic order. Thus the first eight verses all start with the letter א, followed by eight verses beginning with ב and this pattern ends with the letter ט. It is unknown why the Venice printers singled Psalm 119 out and derived the name for the Midrash from it. It is not a dominant feature in the other biblical Psalms, nor does it constitute a popular exegetical technique in Midrash Tehillim. Perhaps the printers selected Psalm 119 because it is the longest of all Psalms.

3.2 The printed editions

3.2.1 The early printed editions

The first printed edition of Midrash Tehillim, along with Midrash Proverbs and Midrash Samuel, was published in Constantinople, or Istanbul, under Sultan Bayezit II. This means that it must be dated before May 1512. According to Buber manuscript Vatican 76, that indeed contains the additional midrashim on Proverbs and Samuel, was taken as main source⁵⁹. This first edition contains a number of additions that may be inserted by the printers. As J. Hacker shows⁶⁰, the printing practice in those days was rather flexible and printers, either as a reaction to comments of the public or because they themselves thought it was necessary, would make changes to a book while it was being printed.

The second printed edition was also printed in the Ottoman Empire, in the city of Salonica. The first Hebrew printing press in Salonica was founded in 1515⁶¹ and it was in that year that Midrash Tehillim was printed. This may suggest that Midrash Tehillim was a popular Midrash, which is indirectly confirmed by Hacker who writes that commentaries on books as Job, Proverbs and also the Psalms were flourishing⁶². Buber assumes that the Salonica edition was also based on Vatican 76, since he sees no

⁵⁸ See chapter 11 of Buber's introduction where 55 people who mentioned Midrash Tehillim, are listed.

⁵⁹ Buber, 'Introduction' to *Midrash Tehillim* p. 110.

⁶⁰ Hacker, J. 'The intellectual activity of the Jews of the Ottoman Empire during the 16th and 17th centuries' in Twersky, I. and Septimus, R. (eds) *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1987, p. 103.

⁶¹ 'Salonica' in *Jewish Encyclopedia* www.jewishencyclopedia.com.

⁶² Hacker, 'The intellectual activity', p. 114.

elements of the other manuscripts⁶³. Typical features of this manuscript, such as mistakes in the numbering of the Psalms and the absence of comments on Psalms 96-99, are also reflected by this print. Vatican 76 goes no further than Psalm 118 and it is therefore quite surprising that the Salonica edition does have the remaining part from 119 until 150. In addition it has a commentary on Psalm 119 that is attributed to the Spanish scholar Mattathias ha-Yitshari⁶⁴. It is not clear how the Salonica printers got the missing part. All manuscripts, except for Parma 1232 and Cambridge OR 786 that have a few comments on Psalm 119, end with comments on Psalm 118 or they end even earlier. Has it been composed during the three years between the Constantinople and the Salonica edition or did it form a consistent part of a manuscript similar to Vatican 76 that somehow got lost? If so, why do the other manuscripts also end with 118 or 119? There is no external reason, such as the division of the Psalms, that can account for this phenomenon. The fifth book of the Psalms runs from 107 until 150, which makes the unexpected halt even more puzzling. The answer to the question where these comments of the second part of Midrash Tehillim come from, is partly answered by Buber⁶⁵. He sees the Yalkut Shim'oni, an anthology of Midrashim of the twelfth or thirteenth century, as principal source for Psalms 122-137. The comments on 119-121 and those starting with 138 until 150 have presumably been inserted by a later darshan. Perhaps⁶⁶ the missing part has been compiled by Jews in either Istanbul or Salonica, who partly used existing material, i.e. the Yalkut Shim'oni.

The third edition of Midrash Tehillim appeared in Venice in 1546 and has the additional material on Psalm 119 to the end. The Venice print is most likely dependent upon the Constantinople print. It contains the same additions that were present in the Constantinople print, and it has not filled in the missing parts of this print, although they were to be found in Vatican 76. On the other hand the printers did make several additions⁶⁷, which are very similar to a group of four manuscripts⁶⁸. The remaining printed editions⁶⁹ have some new elements such as a list of biblical verses that were quoted and some minor commentaries on the derashot, but they mainly draw upon the afore mentioned prints.

⁶³ See note 59.

⁶⁴ See 'Mattathias ha-Yitshari' in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. He lived in the fourteenth / fifteenth century and his commentary may have come to the Ottoman Empire after the expulsion from Spain in 1492.

⁶⁵ Buber, 'Introduction' to *Midrash Tehillim* p. 5. W.G. Braude, who translated Midrash Tehillim into English, remarks in *The Midrash on Psalms*, 1959, New York, Introduction p. 28 that Buber failed to include a reference to Aaron Moses Padua who suggested that these comments were inserted between 1241 and 1340, which still does not explain why they did not appear in the first print.

⁶⁶ This would in fact be another research project.

⁶⁷ Only until 37.3 .

⁶⁸ Florence (ב), Vatican 81(ד) Frankfurt (ה) and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 (ו)

⁶⁹ 1613 Prague where Midrash Tehillim was printed together with the Midrash on Proverbs and the one on Song of Songs, 1730 Amsterdam which used the Prague print, 1794 Polonnoye, 1800 Zolkiev based on Venice, 1850 Lemberg, 1851 Lemberg which has only material on the first book i.e. Psalms 1-41, 1861 Stettin, 1865 Warschau with a commentary by Padua, 1873 and 1875 Warschau. For more information regarding the printed editions: see chapter 17 of Buber's Introduction.

Table of content of the editions and manuscripts

Printed edition	Date	Content
Constantinople	1512	1-118
Salonica	1515	1-118, 119-150 comment by Mattathias ha-Yitshari
Venice	1546	1-118, 119-150
Prague	1613	1-118, 119-150
All other printed editions		1-150
Manuscripts		
Parma 1232	14th or 15 th century	1-119.8
Florence Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Plut. 2.13	13th or 14 th century	1-118
Vatican 76	unknown, before 1512	1-118
Vatican 81	before 1598	1-118 (2 verses)
Frankfurt	1542?	17-118
Cambridge OR 786 (12)	1282	1-119(until passage 119.8)
Trinity College Cambridge F18.39	Unknown	1-118
Paris Hebr. 152 (1)	1533	1-118
Manuscripts belonging to Abraham Provençali	Before 1546 (Venice edition)	1-119 (until passage 119.6)

3.2.2 The modern editions

3.2.2.1 The Rosenberg print

Currently there are two relatively modern editions of Midrash Tehillim. The earliest edition is that of Solomon Buber, published in Wilna in 1891. The latest is the so-called Rosenberg print which has been published in 2003. In many instances the text of Midrash Tehillim has been needlessly 'emended' by the Rosenberg edition. The examples that will follow come from a comparison between Buber's 22.2 and Rosenberg's 22.2. There is a tendency to normalize the spelling, for example פרצופין is rendered as פרצופים, while the end nun is standard in Rabbinic Hebrew. The part that describes the fate of Haman's sons, that at some points deviates from the parallel in Talmud Bavli Megillah 15B has been replaced by this very parallel. The fact that it was not completely identical to the Talmud most likely was intentional, namely to exaggerate the fate of those who threaten Israel, but this seems to be of no concern to

the editors. Another kind of change is found at the end of the passage where **אור לישראל** has been replaced by **נר לישראל**. In this case there is no consideration for the fact that **אור לישראל** is derived from Isaiah 10.17 that was quoted at the beginning of the passage. A more understandable modification is the addition of the word **כתיב**, but this has not been put between brackets and there is also no support for it in the manuscripts. Alterations which are made without evidence from the manuscripts and which are also not accounted for in an apparatus form the reason why this edition cannot be deemed a critical edition.

The editors of the Rosenberg edition echo Buber's ideas on the background of Midrash Tehillim. They present a new idea, namely that 'Midrash Tehillim's essential thoughts were to set up a foundation of matters of halacha⁷⁰'. They reason that this may be concluded from the fact that later authorities such as Rashi and Rav Nissim Gaon based some of their halachic ideas on Midrash Tehillim. However, Buber⁷¹ lists only one instance where Rav Nissim Gaon quoted Midrash Tehillim. In this passage, 5.5, is taught that also the everyday's language of Israel is worth studying which is followed by an exposé on 'brother of the seven, father to the eight'. In this case neither the number nor the content are convincing. Also in the instances where Rashi quoted Midrash Tehillim, the material is mostly haggadic and not halachic⁷². This is not to say that Midrash Tehillim does not contain halachic material, because it certainly does, but the arguments given by the Rosenberg editors is not convincing. Examples found in these 70 derashot that contain halachic teachings are: keeping the ordinance of Tefillin will be reckoned as labouring in the Torah day and night⁷³, this is also said for reading the Shema every morning and evening and of reading two chapters of Scripture during the morning and two chapters during the evening⁷⁴. It is not obligatory to wear tsitsit during the evening prayer⁷⁵. Another halacha states that God links His name to marriage⁷⁶; and when the Israelites are wearing the tallit, they should consider themselves clothed with the Shechinah⁷⁷.

3.2.2.2 The Buber edition

Buber's gargantuan work consisted of comparing manuscript Parma 1232, which he used as base text, with seven other manuscripts as well as with the notes made in the second part of the sixteenth century by Abraham Provençali in the margin of a copy of the Venice printed edition. In these notes Provençali indicated which sayings were superfluous and which sayings were missing according to the six manuscripts that were in his possession. Besides these manuscripts and notes Buber also looked at the

⁷⁰ Buber, 'Introduction' to *Midrash Tehillim* p. 12.

⁷¹ Idem, p. 66.

⁷² Midrash Tehillim is often quoted in conjunction with the explanation of a Scriptural verse. Most of them concern the Psalms.

⁷³ 1.17

⁷⁴ 1.17

⁷⁵ 6.1

⁷⁶ 59.2

⁷⁷ 90.18

10 extant printed editions. The content of the notes by Provençali reveals that the manuscripts he used bear many resemblances to Parma 1232 and Cambridge OR 786 (12) and this may have been the reason Buber made one of these manuscripts his primary text. The main aspect that renders this edition less fit is the tendency to make changes that are not accounted for. It frequently happens that Buber wrote in his notes that a certain reading is supported by for example both Parma 1232 and Cambridge, but failed to mention the fact that there were considerable differences between the two. It is therefore necessary to closely examine the manuscripts for each passage. The Halle University that is currently preparing an electronic synoptic critical edition of Midrash Tehillim using all the manuscripts, including fragmented material from the Cairo Geniza, will supply this need.

3.3 The manuscripts

3.3.1 Characteristics of the manuscripts

For practical reasons I have only used the eight main, and more or less complete, manuscripts that Buber also used. The comparison of these manuscripts to Buber's edition gives insight into the way Buber dealt with them and these eight manuscripts are still the most important witnesses to Midrash Tehillim. Besides these manuscripts there are fragments of Midrash Tehillim, which are only of use for those preparing a critical edition⁷⁸. Like most of the Hebrew manuscripts, also the manuscripts of Midrash Tehillim are from the Middle Ages⁷⁹. In general three branches of scripts can be detected, an Islamic branch, a Christian branch and a Byzantine branch. The Islamic branch can be subdivided into an Eastern branch which is often referred to as Oriental (מזרחי) and that covers the region stretching from Iran, Yemen to Libya. The Western Islamic branch is found in Morocco (Maghreb), Spain and later on also Provence. The Christian branch can be located north of the Mediterranean Sea, stretching out to Germany and Poland. There are two sub-groups, namely that of the northern countries such as Germany, and one of the south. Once a script has been identified, it cannot automatically be traced back to a region and era because of immigration. According to Beit-Arié scribes would go from one area to another, thus for example bringing sefardic script to Italy⁸⁰. In the table below the different scripts of Medieval Hebrew manuscripts are presented. In the description of the manuscripts of Midrash Tehillim reference to these different scripts will be made.

⁷⁸ Although the Hebrew Union College (Cincinnati) 47 manuscript is almost complete, it is less useful because it seems to be based on the Polonnoye edition of 1794.

⁷⁹ The earliest dated Hebrew manuscripts are from 1000 CE onwards. Beit-Arié mentions several reasons for this phenomenon such as book burnings, loss of books because of emigration or expulsion, but most importantly the fact that the manuscripts were privately owned and were intensively used. Beit-Arié, M. *Hebrew manuscripts of East and West: towards a comparative codicology*, London, 1993, p. 9.

⁸⁰ Beit-Arié, *Hebrew manuscripts*, p. 32.

Table of scripts as found in Medieval Hebrew manuscripts

Islamic branch	Christian branch
1) Eastern Islamic	1) Northern
Oriental square	Ashkenazic square
Oriental semi-cursive	Ashkenazic semi-cursive
Oriental current semi-cursive	Ashkenazic current semi-cursive
Yemenite square (rather late)	Ashkenazic cursive
Persian - only semi-cursive	2) Southern
2) Western Islamic	Italian square
Sefardic square	Italian semi-cursive
Sefardic semi-cursive	Italian cursive
Sefardic current semi-cursive	Byzantine
Sefardic current cursive (rather late)	Byzantine semi-cursive

Biblioteca Palatina Parma Codice de Rossi 2552 (1232) Buber's siglum א

The Parma manuscript is written in the fourteenth or fifteenth century⁸¹. It is written in Sefardic semi-cursive script⁸² and offers a running commentary from 1.1 until 119.8. In the Buber edition the end of Parma is marked by the words מכאן עד סוף הספר הוא הוספה. Each page contains one column of text and most of the time the entire width has been used and this sometimes resulted in lengthened letters in the final words. The chapters are often numbered, presumably by the person who made this manuscript⁸³. They begin on the right and the first words are written in larger sized letters, which are still Sefardic semi-cursive, not square as some other manuscripts have. A space and often also a dot mark the transition from one parasha to the next. The abbreviations that are used are quite common, such as דיא (דבר אחר), רי (רבי), אמר (אמר), תלמוד תל (תלמוד), (זהו שאמר הכתוב) ושיה (לומר). A less current abbreviation is הבייה where we usually find הקביה for הקדוש ברוך הוא. Parma uses a superscript circle-like sign as indication

⁸¹ Thus according to the index of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, there are watermarks supporting this view.

⁸² According to the index of the Parma library.

⁸³ There may be a few exceptions. Number 22 has been inserted by a different person.

for a special abbreviation, see for example 6.5 where הרפאִים looks like הרפאִא. This manuscript has been preserved in a rather good shape and is legible throughout.

Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Plut. 2.13 (Florence) Buber's siglum ב

The Florence manuscript begins with 1.1 and goes on until the end of 118 and it also contains pages on some of the pilgrimage songs (שירי המעלות). None of the other manuscripts have this and there is also no parallel to what the Yalkut offers. According to Buber⁸⁴ it has been taken from the gemara on Talmud Bavli Yoma 35B and from Lamentations Rabbah. This manuscript has most likely been completed in the thirteenth or fourteenth century⁸⁵.

Florence is written in Sefardic semi-cursive script. Each page consists of one column. The letters are at times so close to one another that it is difficult to decipher them. In addition to this some parts of Florence are not legible, probably because the material has deteriorated over time. The chapters are occasionally numbered. Many chapters have the opening words in large square letters, but at the end of the manuscript this custom has been replaced by large letters in the Sefardic semi-cursive script. There usually is no separation between the parashiyot, but sometimes small dots are used. Florence contains many errors which range from missing letters⁸⁶ to skipping a couple of lines⁸⁷ to complete passages that are missing⁸⁸. According to Buber this manuscript is close to Vatican 81, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Frankfurt. In many passages this is indeed the case, but at times there are similarities with manuscripts outside this family as well as is the case in 14.7, 20.1, 22.12, 118.13 where Florence also has aspects in common with Vatican 76.

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Vat. Ebr. 76 Buber's siglum ג

Vatican 76 has served as model for the first print of 1512 and must therefore be dated before this year. Also in this case the copyist is unknown. Each page consists of one column. The script is Oriental square and the words are almost written without spaces between them. The chapters are numbered, but here many mistakes have been made. Thus passage 4.6 is labelled 5, 5.1 has received the number 6, 6.1 is labelled 7 etc. The order is correct in 44 and further, but the number 79 is given to 78.8 and again the numbering is incorrect. Due to the fact that Psalms 96-99 are missing, 100.1 is numbered 97 and the numbering is wrong until the end of passage. Other than the number, there is nothing that marks the beginning of a new chapter. There is no indication that one parasha ends and a new one starts. Vatican 76 seems to prefer defective writing over plene writing. The word משל has often been added in the margin by a different hand and sometimes there are other small additions to this manuscript. In the parts examined there were hardly any mistakes, except for the

⁸⁴Buber, 'Introduction', p. 83.

⁸⁵ Thus according to the index of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts.

⁸⁶ Such as נאין instead of נאלין in 20.4

⁸⁷ See the section on 10.2 for an example.

⁸⁸ Idem as note 84, p. 82 gives a list.

Aramaic in 105.11. Vatican 76 is written in a careful way and contains no grammatical surprises. In a number of cases it bears similarities with Vatican 81 and to a lesser extent, or so it seems, with Florence, Frankfurt and Trinity College Cambridge.

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Vat. Ebr. 81 Buber's siglum 7

Vatican 81 originally ended with two lines on Psalm 118, but in the year 1598 Giovanni Paolo Eustachio⁸⁹ added material for 118-150. Eustachio is the baptismal name of Elijah ben Menahem ben Nola, a famous Rabbi and Hebraist who after his conversion became scriptor and teacher in the Vatican. The terminus ante quem has to be 1598, but this is rather late. The name of the first writer is not known.

Vatican 81 is written in Sefardic semi-cursive script and it contains one column per page. Often letters of words have been extended so that they fill the whole line. If the chapter is marked, it is done so by a number with small dotted v-shapes in superscript. The first words of the lemma are in square script and they are larger than the other words. Between one parasha and the next a dot is used to mark the transition. The words are separated by spaces. Vatican 81 uses standard abbreviations and it appears to prefer to write words plene. This manuscript misses many passages, whereof the largest group is 85-90. Starting with Psalm 51 the comments are considerably shorter. Buber remarked about this manuscript⁹⁰ that parts have been copied from the Yalkut, including a reference to a specific remez. Buber also wrote that this manuscript ends in the middle of 117, with 2 lines on another Psalm, but it seems that he was mistaken and that the manuscript ends with 118.7. As written above this manuscript belongs to the same family as Florence, Frankfurt and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39, while it sometimes also concurs with Vatican 76. Its presentation of a passage is often marked by brevity.

Bibliotheca Merzbacheriana Monacensis Buber's siglum 7

This manuscript⁹¹ is written in late Sefardic semi-cursive script and has one column per page. The first pages have gone missing and the end of Psalm 17 is the first we have. The chapters are numbered and the opening words of each chapter are in square script and are larger than the comments. On page 102 mention is made of a Rabbi Jehuda Uziel who is perhaps the writer of the manuscript. On the same page the year 1542 is mentioned, this would also be rather late since by then two printed editions had already been published.

Most of the abbreviations do not contain a comma ', but have a wave-like shape in superscript. These waves are also used in the chapter numbering. This is not the case for single words that have been truncated, such as Rabbi. These kinds of shortenings have a comma at the end of letters that are given. There are no marks that separate a

⁸⁹ Buber's 'Introduction' to *Midrash Tehillim*, p. 84

⁹⁰ Idem.

⁹¹ Since this manuscript is currently located in the university library in Frankfurt am Main, it will be referred to as 'Frankfurt'.

parasha from the next. In the few instances where Frankfurt has text on the meshalim that were selected, it seems to concur with Vatican 81 and had no special readings.

Cambridge University Library OR 786 (12) Buber's siglum ı

It is this manuscript that, according to Buber, belongs to the same family as Parma. It covers the same passages as Parma and ends where 119.9 should have begun. In the manuscript is written that it has been completed in the year 1282. The script is Ashkenazic semi-cursive, it is easy to read and only in a few cases words look smudged.

Cambridge presents its material in two columns per page. If a word does not fit on the line, the part that does fit is written down and on the new line the word is written again. In contrast with this, Cambridge also truncates words at the end turning לישראל into לישי. Each chapter is numbered and the first lemma appears in large letters. The parashiyot are divided from one another by blanks. Cambridge contains a number of grammatical mistakes and writing errors. While Cambridge certainly resembles Parma with respect to the content, there are a few occasions on which Cambridge has a different reading that is also found in some of the other manuscripts. A good example hereof can be found in 6.1 where Parma has נפשי יצאה and Cambridge has the more unusual נפשי נפקת, which is also present in Florence, Vatican 76, Vatican 81, Trinity College Cambridge College Cambridge and Paris.

Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 (49) Buber's siglum ı

For the first ten chapters of this manuscript⁹² a painting-like frame contains the chapter number, for 11 and further this has been replaced by either some decorations above the chapter numbers or v-shapes that are also used on the first words of the chapter. In all cases the first words of the verse commented on are in square script. The remainder of the manuscript is written in a tidy Sefardic semi-cursive script. The passages are usually separated by a small dot, but this also occurs within the passages themselves.

Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 uses abbreviations sparingly, the introduction to a, possibly remote, verse זהו שאמר הכתוב is always given in full and truncation of words occurs occasionally. The comments on 96-99 are absent which has resulted in a wrong numbering for the Psalms that follow 95. Thus 105 has been given the number 100, 114 can be found under 109 and the comments on 118 can be found in 111 and 112, which has been noted by a later hand that wrote the correct numbers in square script. The comments on the last twenty Psalms is considerably shorter than on the earlier Psalms. Trinity College Cambridge often resembles Vatican 81, but in 14.6 it clearly follows the version Parma and Cambridge have. The order of blessings, good things and consolations is like Parma and Cambridge. Like these manuscripts it has both rav /

⁹² Buber obtained this manuscript from Rabbi Ginsburg, which explains why it is sometimes also referred to as the Ginsburg manuscript. In this thesis the name that refers to its location, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39, will be employed. It should not be confused with Trinity College Cambridge F12.6 that contains fragmentary material on Midrash Tehillim.

student examples, it speaks of the **בית רבן** and it even has the addition with the 1 Chronicles 16 quote that is also found in Cambridge.

(Bibliothèque nationale de France) Paris Hebr. 152 (1) Buber's siglum ח

This manuscript was completed in 1533 and is written in late Sefardic semi-cursive script. There is one column on every page. The chapters begin with big square letters and at times something similar in slightly smaller letters is found within the chapter but there is no clear pattern to be discerned. At the end of a passage a dot and a blank mark the transition to a new passage. Paris does not often use abbreviations and the ones it uses are also longer than usual such as **שנאי**. Like Parma it employs the abbreviation **הביה** and not **הקביה**.

Buber has associated this manuscript with Vatican 76, but its quality is inferior when compared to Vatican 76. Buber suggests⁹³ that the Constantinople print served as model for the copyist of Paris. Given the late date of Paris and the many transcriptional errors that are made, his theory seems correct. If one looks at its rendering of 11.1, one comes across a duplicate **מלך** in the introduction of the mashal, the words **מכל עבדיו** on the other hand are missing, also missing is the word **ביתו** which elevates the servants to a higher position, it has **למעלה** twice, at the expense of the word **למטה** and Rabbi Acha is mentioned twice. The duplications and the omissions give the passage unintentionally a different meaning, this suggests that the copyist was either working hastily or did not know Hebrew well enough to understand the implications of his mistakes. Paris is not an exact copy of the Constantinople print because it at times deviates, for example in the end of 22.12 where it seems to follow Parma.

Table with script per manuscript

Manuscript	Family	Script
Parma 1232	A	Sefardic semi-cursive
Florence Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Plut. 2.13	B	Sefardic semi-cursive
Vatican 76	C	Oriental square
Vatican 81	B	Sefardic semi-cursive
Frankfurt	B	Sefardic semi-cursive
Cambridge OR 786 (12)	A	Ashkenazic semi-cursive
Trinity College Cambridge F18.39	B	Sefardic semi-cursive
Paris Hebr. 152 (1)	C	Sefardic semi-cursive

⁹³ As note 89, p. 87.

3.3.2 Families of manuscripts

Buber distinguishes three families of manuscripts⁹⁴. The first family is that of Parma (ⲡ) and Cambridge (ⲓ). The manuscripts of Provençali also belong to this family. The second group he has discerned contains Florence (ⲓ), Vatican 81(ⲧ) Frankfurt (ⲧ) and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 (ⲓ). The last group has as main manuscript Vatican 76 (ⲡ) along with Paris (ⲡ). That two or more manuscripts belong to the same family, evidently does not mean that they are exactly the same. Unfortunately Buber's way of dealing with the manuscripts did not always take the differences within a family into account. This has led to the suggestion that there is uniformity among the manuscripts, while that is not always the case.

In his Introduction Buber has listed additions that are found in Parma and often also in Cambridge, the manuscripts of Provençali and in the Yalkut. Here too the reader should be aware of the fact that the list is not exhaustive and that not all the extra texts have been mentioned. A similar list is also given for the additions that are found in the other manuscripts. In order to understand the nature of the material that is presented in one family, but that is absent in another family I have looked up the passages that Buber listed. These additions are recensional changes, not transcriptional errors or writing variations. Below a description of these additions will be given for these two families of manuscripts.

The list on the additional material in Parma is considerably longer than that of the other manuscripts. While there is no clear 'programme' behind this extra material in Parma, a few recurring items can be detected. Some teachings on religious festivals and religious practices are found. They inform the readers about Sukkot⁹⁵ and Yom Kippur⁹⁶, intercalation⁹⁷ and the Eighteen Benedictions⁹⁸. There are also some halachot, for example that one should not eat flesh of animals that have died by themselves⁹⁹. Another subject is the Torah. Israel was forced to receive the Torah because refusal would give God a reason to return the earth to emptiness and chaos¹⁰⁰. The fact that Israel stifled the study of Torah has led to exile¹⁰¹. On several occasions Israel is encouraged to study Torah and to keep the mitzvot¹⁰², and they will be rewarded for their efforts¹⁰³. There are many remarks on David, which suggests that Cambridge and Parma have a Davidic orientation. He is portrayed in a positive way in

⁹⁴As note 89, chapter 12.

⁹⁵ Lulav and etrog are mentioned in 17.5, in passage 26.5 is explained that one should not use a stolen lulav. Circling the altar seven times during Sukkot is mentioned in 17.5 and 26.5.

⁹⁶ 27.4

⁹⁷ 20.5, 81.4, 28.5, 104.7

⁹⁸ 20.2

⁹⁹ 18.25

¹⁰⁰ 75.1, 76.4, 20.3

¹⁰¹ 32.3

¹⁰² 18.23, 16.12 5.2

¹⁰³ 84.3, 84.4, 104.18, 20.3

a number of them¹⁰⁴ and it is reported that he has been forgiven for his sin¹⁰⁵. Some details about his relationship with Saul are given¹⁰⁶ and one of the additions says that David accused Saul falsely of lies. Interestingly, we also find cases in which the reverse is argued: David suffered from gossip¹⁰⁷ and he excommunicated a slanderer¹⁰⁸. In a few other additions¹⁰⁹ we also find a condemnation of slander, לשון הרע, but here it is used in a more general sense.

A large number of additions deal with the topic of redemption and with speculations about what will happen in the time to come. The theme of redemption is not limited to the future redemption, but the additions also deal with those of the past. Extra information is provided on the Exodus, Esther's deeds, Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar. An interesting element is present in 30.6 where the Hasmoneans, see below at 6.5.4, are mentioned. However, most occasions are in the present in which Israel is oppressed and in which it longs and hopes for redemption. Many aspects are treated; for example Israel's despair, God's longing for redemption, the four kingdoms, the contrast with former redemptions and the future redemption by God that will be everlasting etc. There is also attention for what will happen in the remote future, such as Judgment Day, Gehenna and also the resurrection of the dead. The latter is mentioned no less than five times¹¹⁰. The addition in 60.3 reveals something about the date of the manuscripts Parma and Cambridge, as well as Provençali's manuscripts, because there is a reference to the war against Rome and the war against Constantinople¹¹¹. This would place the manuscripts in the Byzantine Empire. In this setting of the remote future one might also expect additions that bear a messianic character. As will be pointed out further on, Midrash Tehillim does not have significant material about the Messiah. It is in this respect noteworthy that on three occasions in the additional material Parma and Cambridge mention the existence of two Messiahs¹¹². The name of the Messiah existed before the creation of the world¹¹³, but this is also present in other teachings in Midrash Tehillim that are supported by all the manuscripts.

¹⁰⁴ David is given a double portion of kingship; in this world and in the world to come, see 5.4 and 18.27. God shows His face to David in 17.5. Other instances are present in 18.2, 18.28, 18.30, 22.28, 58.1. In 83.3 is reported that David cursed Edom and the ten nations. Verses 14-18 of Psalm 83 are to be regarded as the curses David uttered against them.

¹⁰⁵ 24.10

¹⁰⁶ 18.7, 36.1, 56.1, 56.2, 92.9

¹⁰⁷ Twice in 41.7, 58.2

¹⁰⁸ 12.2

¹⁰⁹ 26.5, 50.3, 39.5

¹¹⁰ 18.11, 19.13, 25.2, 68.5 and 71.4

¹¹¹ There is one other occasion where Rome and Constantinople are mentioned together. In 9.8 they form part of a group of heathen cities whereof the remains still existed, while Jerusalem was utterly destroyed. This derasha contains some difficulties and unlike 60.3 it does not speak of two capitals at the same time.

¹¹² 21.1, 60.3, 87.6

¹¹³ 90.12

In the additions of Parma and Cambridge references¹¹⁴ to Aramaic translations, and in one instance clearly to Targum Onqelos¹¹⁵, are found. This suggests an affinity within Parma and Cambridge with the Targumim. Though many of the additions have no parallels, some of this extra material is inspired by earlier sources, especially Talmud Jerushalmi and the Mishnah.

The vast majority of additions found in 'the other manuscripts' are only found in Florence Vatican 81, Trinity College Cambridge and after 17.9 also in Frankfurt. At times these readings are also present in the first editions or in the Yalkut. All sorts of topics are addressed, including the situation of Esther¹¹⁶ and former redemptions by the hand of human beings that were followed by new servitudes that are contrasted with the redemption by God¹¹⁷. Buber mentions sources for approximately half of them, they range from Talmud Bavli, Sifre, Tanchuma to Midrash Samuel.

About forty additions are found in all the other manuscripts. There are two features that stand out: some additions are also found earlier in Midrash Tehillim and the additions found in the comments on Psalm 90 and onwards are often paralleled by the Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezer. For the ones in 92, the Psalm praising the Sabbath, there is a link to pisqa'ot 18, 19 and 20. Another pisqa that regularly offers parallels is 35, which appears in 90.10, 91.6 and 91.7. The other pisqa'ot seem to have no common factor¹¹⁸. Only in one or two occasions¹¹⁹, errors by a copyist seem to have caused the absence of an explanation in Parma.

3.3.3 Implications

The vast majority of the material of Midrash Tehillim is represented by all the manuscripts. This suggests that there was a kernel wherewith everything started. One can assume the existence of a so-called *Urtext*, in the sense of a kernel, not in the sense of one document wherewith everything started, to which the manuscripts somehow can be linked. Midrash Tehillim had not reached its final phase yet, which can be deduced from the existence of duplicates¹²⁰ and also the differences between the families of manuscripts point towards its fluidity. The problem is that we do not know into which direction the kernel moved. It most likely moved into several directions. The shortest branch used a collection of material that can be identified as the rather late Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezer¹²¹ (Vatican 76, Paris), then there is the longer branch that used

¹¹⁴ 56.2, 60.2, 76.3 and 77.1. Other instances are also present in the other manuscripts are 18.36, 48.5 and 81.7.

¹¹⁵ 110.2

¹¹⁶ 22.7, where is described how the people who surrounded Esther were dividing her belongings before she went to see Ahasverus. 22.32 on how Haman's wealth was divided.

¹¹⁷ See 50.3

¹¹⁸ In 90.18 pisqa 31 is used, in 93.5 pisqa 5, in 112.2 pisqa 29 and in 114.8 it is pisqa 42.

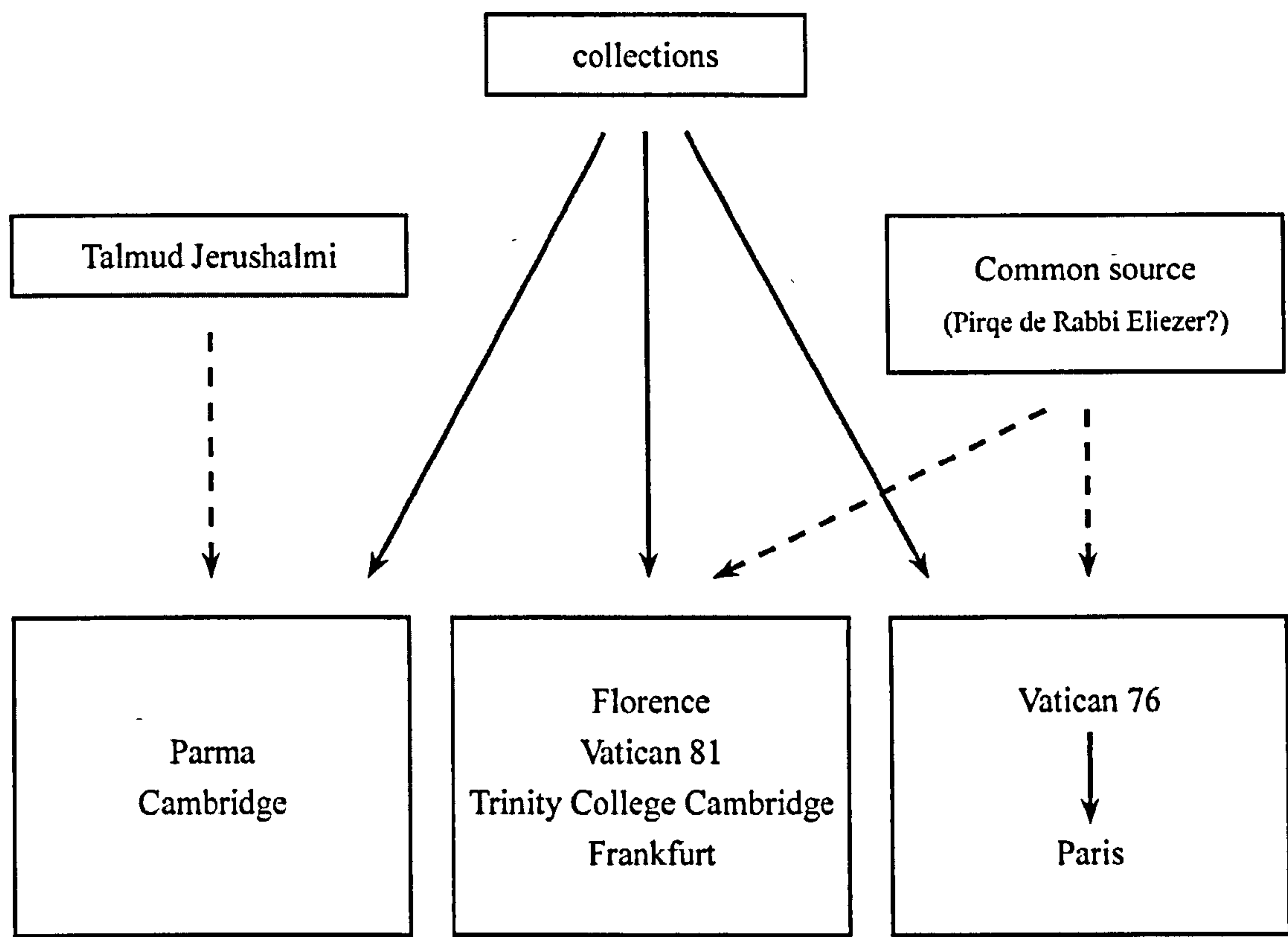
¹¹⁹ Certainly in 2.3 where there is a case of parablepsis.

¹²⁰ For example the teaching that the Torah preceded the creation is found in 72.6, 90.12 and 93.3. Only the teaching in 90.12 is an addition found in Parma and Cambridge.

¹²¹ That itself is somewhat problematic because it looks incomplete.

a number of sources and also had 'fresh' material and thirdly there is the longest branch that is interested in the theme of redemption, which was already present in the kernel, and uses Talmud Jerushalmi and other early sources (Parma and Cambridge). Buber's second list gives the extra material found in the family of Florence, as well as the extra material found in the Vatican 76 family. At times material is found in both families, which suggests that there either the family of Florence and the Vatican 76 family had a common source they used, that the family of Parma did not have or did not use, or that one group influenced the other.

The development of the manuscripts may have been like this:



The reader should be aware of the fact that the method of editing Buber chose, taking one manuscript as base text, has at least two side-effects. First of all it determines the, initial, perception one has of a work. If for example the Florence manuscript would have served as base text, one would be tempted to regard all what Parma and Cambridge have as 'late and superfluous'. And secondly, one would probably have a different opinion about the content of Midrash Tehillim and its originality.

4 The “sources” of Midrash Tehillim

4.1 The question of “sources”

One of the unsolved issues of the study of Midrash and Targum is the question how to deal with the presence of parallels. Another question closely connected to this is how one can determine what the “sources” that a given Midrash or Targum used are. When speaking of sources one presupposes the availability of finished literary works¹²². As we already concluded for Midrash Tehillim, and as is witnessed by the manuscripts for other Rabbinic works as well, this assumption is incorrect. Rabbinic works were in a fluid state. This is not only the case for later Midrashim, but also for the Mishnah and the Talmud which were recreated during the process of copying. But even if it is possible to detect a dependency between one Rabbinic text and another, it is almost impossible to prove that the receiving Rabbinic text used that particular parallel. In the description of the parallels we saw that two families of manuscripts had material that is paralleled in the Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, but did both families use the Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer or perhaps a source of Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, or perhaps it is even more complicated if for example one tradition was handed down in writing, while another tradition was transmitted orally. In case there are a number of parallels, it is almost impossible to determine dependency. In that case ‘the best we can do is to collect the attestations of a given aggadah, compare and contrast them, and try to work out some sort of tradition history¹²³’.

Let us now look at what Buber has to say about our present question. In his introduction Buber has included a list of works that he considered as having served as source¹²⁴ for Midrash Tehillim. He also lists works that in his opinion have drawn upon Midrash Tehillim. In the first list he mentions the Mishnah, Tosefta, Mechilta, Sifre to Deuteronomy, Talmud Jerushalmi, Pesiqta de Rav Kahana, Tanchuma, Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer¹²⁵ and Targum Onqelos. This list seems very reasonable. What stand out are the many instances in which the Talmud Jerushalmi and the Pesiqta de Rav Kahana are used. Although there are some derashot in which the Talmud Bavli forms a source, the dominating Talmud is that of Palestine. This hints at a preference for Palestinian works.

Buber's second list¹²⁶ is unreliable because Buber assumes that all these Midrashic works are younger than Midrash Tehillim and that they all use Midrash Tehillim. The Midrashim Buber mentions are: Exodus Rabbah, Leviticus Rabbah, Deuteronomy Rabbah, Song of Songs Rabbah, Ruth Rabbah, Midrash Lamentations Rabbah, Ecclesiastes Rabbah, Esther Rabbah, Midrash Samuel and Pesiqta Rabbati. The present state of knowledge regarding these Midrashim is that they may be younger than Buber claims. Lamentations Rabbah is to be dated around 500 CE and Leviticus

¹²² Alexander, *Targum Canticles*, Introduction, p. 39.

¹²³ Idem.

¹²⁴ Starting on p. 10 of the Introduction.

¹²⁵ Buber's examples start with Midrash Tehillim 91, so this may be found in all the manuscripts except for Parma and Cambridge.

¹²⁶ Starting on p. 54 of the Introduction.

Rabbah is even to be dated around 450 CE. Thus we can argue that Buber's source theory is highly unlikely. It seems best to consider these Midrashim as parallels for the moment. We should take into account that the Midrashim that are mentioned may still have been 'in progress' and had not yet been given their final form¹²⁷.

Outside the Rabbinic corpus, there are the later commentators who have used Midrash Tehillim in their works. The earliest person to refer to Midrash Tehillim is probably the North-African Nissim ben Jacob ben Nissim ibn Shahin (990-1062). Other people who quoted Midrash Tehillim are the Spanish Isaac ben Rabbi ibn Ghiyyat (1038-1089), Nathan ben Jehiel of Rome (1035-1110) and Rashi (1040-1105).

4.2 Midrash Tehillim and the Yalkut Shim'oni

Some passages that are present in Midrash Tehillim appear in the anthology Yalkut Shim'oni that is usually dated to the twelfth or thirteenth century. Thus we have, together with Aggadat Bere'shit, two other commentaries on the Psalms. The Yalkut has used over fifty works¹²⁸ and sometimes confuses one work with another¹²⁹ either referring to Midrash Tehillim while the source was another work or referring to another work where Midrash Tehillim should have been mentioned. The manuscripts the author of the Yalkut used were not always of a good quality¹³⁰ which has resulted in conjectures and in combinations with other sources. Also the manuscripts of the Yalkut itself are somewhat problematic. Only the Oxford manuscript covers a large part of the Yalkut and the other manuscripts are so fragmentary that even when combined they do not cover the entire Yalkut.

The Yalkut does have derashot on Psalms 119-150. It heavily draws on other sources for these derashot, among others on Genesis Rabbah, Tanchuma, Talmud Bavli Berachot, Pesiqta de Rav Kahana and Pesiqta Rabbati, the Mechilta and to a lesser extent it uses the Talmud Jerushalmi. Further research is needed to establish the origin of the remaining material that the Yalkut has on these Psalms.

In half of the cases there is no parallel to a derasha of Midrash Tehillim in the Yalkut, neither in the section on that particular Psalm, nor in the comment on the verse that acted as remote verse in Midrash Tehillim. In the majority of these passages, the introduction formula וְשִׁירָהּ and/or the remote verse are missing. At first sight this may appear to be a result of the anthological character of the Yalkut; for the sake of brevity some passages were reduced in length. However, in a few instances there was an opportunity to preserve the petichah form of the passages without adding much, but for some reason the parallel deviates near the end. The parallel on 90.6, Yalkut Psalms

¹²⁷ Or as Alexander remarks 'Rabbinic tradition seems to have been in a very fluid state in late antiquity' and 'Rabbinic tradition in late antiquity was transmitted not only through written texts, but also orally, through preaching in synagogue and through study and debate in schools. This mixture of oral and written media complicates the problem of literary dependence and in many cases makes it insoluble.' *Targum Canticles*, Introduction, p. 39

¹²⁸ Stemmerger, *Talmud and Midrash*, p. 351.

¹²⁹ See Buber's Introduction p. 61.

¹³⁰ Stemmerger calls them 'defective', idem as note 128.

841, misses at the end the reference to Psalm 90, which consists of only five words. The passage seemed to be prepared for a petichah because וְשִׁיָּה and the remote verse are present at the beginning. Another example is Yalkut Proverbs 625, which forms a parallel to 3.1, where only לָדוֹר was needed in order to preserve the petichah¹³¹. The Yalkut refers in the section on the Psalms to Midrash Tehillim as מִדְרָשׁ, in other parts where Midrash Tehillim served as main source it says שוחר טוב.

In the cases where the Yalkut did have a parallel for the passages examined there is no common factor to be discerned. Sometimes the text is quite close to what Buber offers. In other instances the content of the Yalkut differs because it follows one of the parallels¹³² or because it combines a parallel with what is present in Midrash Tehillim¹³³. The Yalkut does not reproduce one of the manuscripts, but seems to have found a balance of these, mixed at times with its own inventions. Such a mixture is for example found in Psalms 635, which forms a parallel to Midrash Tehillim 6.5. In the beginning it does not have Rabbi's dictum, which is also not present in Florence and Paris. The hours the sick man is waiting which are mentioned are: four, five, six and then ten. None of the manuscripts have this, the closest are Parma and Cambridge that mention all hours between four and ten. Cambridge has some specific words in common with all the other manuscripts, besides Parma, so it is hard to tell what the Yalkut follows in the rest of the mashal. Paris and Florence are not identical to the Yalkut because they both speak of אֲנוּחַ הַחוּלָה, Florence does not use the word צָבָח that is present in Paris and in the Yalkut and there are other small differences between the Yalkut, Florence and Paris. In its application the Yalkut clearly follows Florence, Vatican 76 and 81, Trinity College Cambridge and Paris, which connect the mashal to David. In Psalms 679, which has a parallel to 20.1, the Yalkut displays some errors which also occur in Florence, yet it does not follow this manuscript entirely and it shows similarities with the other manuscripts as well.

4.3 Midrash Tehillim and Aggadat Bere'shit

Aggadat Bere'shit, a late Midrash, is the second source that provides comments on some of the Psalms. This work has a remarkable, recurring structure: first there is a comment on Genesis, followed by a comment on a part from the Prophets and then there is a section on the Writings. The way this Midrash is built up, suggests a link to a reading cycle. The unity of Scripture is demonstrated by this special structure. The passages from Genesis are following the biblical order. The Psalms play a dominant role, they are not presented in biblical order, but are usually clustered in groups that begin with the same Psalm verse, which is often the first or second verse of a Psalm.

¹³¹ Other instances are found in Yalkut Psalms 767, parallel to 54.1, Yalkut Psalms 777, a much shorter version of 59.1, Yalkut Psalms 728, parallel to 37.1.

¹³² Examples hereof can be found in 10.2 where the Yalkut follows Pesiqta Rabbati 31, 11.4 where the Yalkut three times follows Genesis Rabbah (Wilna) or 17.9 that is based on Pesiqta Rabbati 41.

¹³³ See Yalkut Psalms 652 where TB Sanhedrin 107A is combined with Midrash Tehillim 11.1.

Aggadat Bere'shit also employs וְשִׁי as an introduction to a petichah, although the other two uses that are also present in Midrash Tehillim occur here as well¹³⁴. There is not a single petichah that occurs in both works. The remote verses that are brought forward in Aggadat Bere'shit are not used in any of the petichot in Midrash Tehillim. Only one remote verse of Aggadat Bere'shit appears in Midrash Tehillim 1-118, but only as proof in a regular passage. This might suggest that besides וְשִׁי, there are no similarities between the two texts. There is however a passage in Aggadat Bere'shit that certainly indicates a shared tradition or even dependence. Three petichot in Midrash Tehillim share the same remote verse, the passages are: 17.1, 90.1 and 102.1. Proverbs 15.8 is the remote verse in these passages and it is also found in connection with Psalm 17.1 in Aggadat Bere'shit 6.1. The link between the Psalm verse and Proverbs 15.8 is in all cases that Proverbs 15.8 contrasts the abominable sacrifice of the wicked to the desired prayer of the upright. In all the Psalms in question the word תפלה 'prayer' is present, which is also present in Proverbs 15.8. There are two other Psalms that contain the word תפלה, Psalm 86 and 142. The comments on Psalm 86 and 142 in Midrash Tehillim do not contain a petichah, both these Psalms are not commented on in Aggadat Bere'shit. The first two passages in Midrash Tehillim identify Balaam as the wicked one whose sacrifice the Lord rejects. In 17.1 this scene is cast into a dialogue in which Balaam tries to persuade God to accept his sacrifice, while referring to the book of Job as proof for the fact that God delights in sacrifices. The Lord declines his interpretation and calls him wicked. In 90.1 we find a monologue by God directed to Balaam. Here is stated that God does have pleasure in the humble sacrifice of sifted flour, but that He does not accept a sacrifice from the wicked. In the end of the passage, a prayer by Israel, who are called righteous, is mentioned. In the last passage, 102.1, the style of comment is different. It does not show a protagonist and an antagonist, but contains 'plain exegesis'. The sacrifice of the wicked is mentioned in the beginning of 102.1, but then the focus turns towards David who at times calls himself David (17.1) and at times 'afflicted' (102.1), by cleverly reinterpreting Psalm 102.1 it is shown that delaying prayer can result in poverty: one should not offer sacrifices, but pray to God without any postponing. The passage in Aggadat Bere'shit on Psalm 17.1 is aware of the two other Psalms that contain תפלה, however it neglects Psalms 86 and 142. The comment does not linger on the question who can be identified as a wicked person, but it wants to know to whom the prayer of the upright belongs. The answer that is given is: Moses (Psalm 90) David (Psalm 17.1) and the Messiah, who is identified as the afflicted one in Psalm 102. David is then singled out because he is the one who prays with skill since he first asks for a small thing and then for a difficult thing. The tradition about these three Psalms is present in the two Midrashim, and in both Midrashim Proverbs 15.8 plays an important role in the interpretation. The explanations that are given differ, this is even the case in Midrash Tehillim where two passages do share the same theme.

¹³⁴ See 6.4.1.3

4.4 Midrash Tehillim and the Pesiqta Rabbati

The date and place of composition of Pesiqta Rabbati is still much debated. A number of people considered the remark that 777 years has passed since the destruction of the Temple to be an important clue to the date of the work that should have reached completion in the year 845 CE. The problem with this remark is that it probably is a gloss that has been inserted by a later reader and therefore provides no relevant information regarding Pesiqta Rabbati other than giving the date ante quem.

Pisqa'ot 31 and 41 are quite important for our study because they contain parallels to no less than three redemptive meshalim in Midrash Tehillim. The majority of the parallels on the selected derashot do not present the actual mashal, but usually have something in common with another element of the derasha. The Pesiqta Rabbati takes in a special position, not only because of the number of parallels to the redemptive meshalim, but also because the two pisqa'ot both belong to one source in Pesiqta Rabbati which contains more parallels to other passages in Midrash Tehillim. These two reasons make it worthwhile to look into this particular part of Pesiqta Rabbati in more detail and to see whether Pesiqta Rabbati and Midrash Tehillim have more in common. There are at least five sources for the Pesiqta Rabbati¹³⁵, pisqa'ot 30-47 belong to the so-called Yelamdenu Rabbenu source, which has not been dated yet. The pisqa'ot of this source can be divided into two groups: 30-37 are connected to the seven Sabbaths of comfort that follow the Ninth of Ab and 38-47 offer discourses from Rosh haShanah to Yom Kippur¹³⁶. In a considerable number of these pisqa'ot the Messiah plays an important role. His name is Ephraim, the Messiah who is usually associated with suffering. According to pisqa 36 Ephraim, who is called משיח צדיקי, has been put away under God's throne of glory where he suffers because of the sins the souls that belong to Israel have committed or will commit. In this particular pisqa God is also said to be in pain since the moment Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the first Temple. In pisqa 37 there seems to be a combination of the idea that Ephraim suffers for Israel's sins and the conception that he was in prison¹³⁷. The Lord will give Ephraim protection and he will receive rewards for his suffering. There is a role for Ephraim in the time when the redemption comes, he proclaims the זמן גאולתכם and he will make the exiled Israelites return to Zion. In one occasion¹³⁸ Ephraim is called גואל מלך משיח, but in the other pisqa'ot it is God from whom redemption is expected. Another element that stands out in this group of pisqa'ot are the Mourners for Zion, the אבילי ציון. They are beseeching God for mercy and deliverance and pray for the coming of the Messiah, even though this will bring about troubles¹³⁹. The Mourners for Zion were in great distress and they are scorned by those who did not wait for the Messiah and God's kingship. These two themes, a Messiah who is involved in Israel's redemption and a group of people who are desperately awaiting the redemption, might also be of interest for Midrash Tehillim. Yet there is no trace of the Mourners for Zion in Midrash

¹³⁵ Stemberger, *Talmud and Midrash*, p. 299.

¹³⁶ Op. cit.

¹³⁷ See pisqa 34.

¹³⁸ Pisqa 33.

¹³⁹ Pisqa 34.

Tehillim, nor of such messianic expectations. Apart from the three parallels the Pesiqta Rabbati and Midrash Tehillim have different thoughts on redemption.

Besides the parallels that are quoted and treated below, there are many other parallels between Midrash Tehillim and Pesiqta Rabbati. This varies from the use of the phrase *רבותינו זהו שאמר הכתוב* and *זהו* to complete derashot. A very clear example hereof is present in pisqa 32 that after quoting Psalm 4.3-4 tells how David's glory was put into shame. This is also present in Midrash Tehillim 4.8 where it fits in well, which cannot be said of Pesiqta Rabbati where it seems a bit off. Later on in this pisqa parallels with Midrash Tehillim 87.1, 87.2 and 87.3 are found. The ma'aseh in 87.2, on Rabbi Jochanan and the gem is only witnessed by Pesiqta Rabbati, Midrash Tehillim and the Yalkut. Another example is pisqa 39 that quotes Psalm 81.1-2 as haftarah. The mashal on the king who consults his three friends concerning the building site for his palace is also present in Midrash Tehillim 81.2. There are also parallels to Midrash Tehillim outside the Yelamdenu-source¹⁴⁰.

One of the major differences with Midrash Tehillim is the pace with which the comments are made. Midrash Tehillim runs quickly through themes and topics, while Pesiqta Rabbati does not shift that much in its comments. This has of course to do with the fact that it concentrates on a particular occasion with a haftarah. However, it does not automatically imply a coherent structure.

4.5 Midrash Tehillim and the Targum of Psalms

As its name suggests, this Targum is dealing with the same basis material as Midrash Tehillim. While quite unusual for a Targum on the Writings, the Targum of Psalms offers a rather literal translation, similar to that of the Targumim of the Pentateuch that consist of base-translation with detachable glosses¹⁴¹. Its Aramaic shows an admixture of eastern, western and Onqelos-Jonathan Aramaic¹⁴² and it is probably from the eighth-ninth¹⁴³ centuries C.E.

The relation between Midrashic and Targumic material is a delicate matter. The cultural hierarchy, Midrash is ranked higher than Targum, may tempt one to assume that in this case Midrash Tehillim is older than the Targum of Psalms. The translator and commentator of this Targum, D.M. Stec, observes that 'several of the midrashic and aggadic additions of TgPss as compared with MT have parallels in Midrash Tehillim. This could mean that TgPss is later than Midr.Teh., or it could suggest that the two works draw upon a common body of later aggadic traditions¹⁴⁴.' An important aspect is the extent to which these parallels are truly parallels and if their number is

¹⁴⁰ See Buber's Introduction p.p. 59 and 60.

¹⁴¹ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, p 31.

¹⁴² Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, p. 10.

¹⁴³ Idem, p. 12. The Targum of Canticles has a similar dialect which Alexander dates to the eighth-ninth centuries C.E.

¹⁴⁴ Stec, D.M., *The Targum of Psalms, Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes*, Collegeville 2004, p 4.

significant. First of all the number of parallels, twentyseven, that Stec gives¹⁴⁵ is quite small, and this number turns out to be even smaller because three of them belong to the problematic second part of Midrash Tehillim for which there are other parallels¹⁴⁶. Secondly, Stec's list with other parallels, i.e. besides Midrash Tehillim, is not exhaustive and it seems to me that there are at times more likely parallels, or perhaps even sources, than Midrash Tehillim. For example the explanation found in Talmud Bavli Berachot 64b may have influenced the Targum's rendering of Psalm 84. Stec's point about a common source that provided material for Midrash Tehillim and the Targum of Songs has to be considered as an option.

¹⁴⁵ Op. Cit., p. 251.

¹⁴⁶ For 122.4 the parallel, or probably source, is Mishnah Ta'anit 5 and in 137.5 Pesiqta Rabbati 31 forms a parallel that also has the same verb 'to cut off', קצץ, while Midrash Tehillim has רצץ.

5 Date, origin and author of Midrash Tehillim

There is a lot of uncertainty about the background of Midrash Tehillim. At the end of the nineteenth century there was a lively discussion between Buber and Zunz. In the *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge* Zunz argued that Midrash Tehillim has to be situated in Southern Italy at the end of the ninth century. Zunz's argument for Italy is based on 9.8 where important rulers are said to have built cities that are named after them. The verse commented on is Psalm 9.7 in which a contrast is detected between the enemy who has come to an end while the ruins of its cities will be forever and Israel. This has to be seen in the light of Jerusalem and the Temple that had suffered greatly from the Destruction in 70 CE. After the lemma has been quoted, the text mentions the names of people who have died, but whose cities are still there: Constantine, Antioch, Romulus and Alexander. The reading of two of these cities, פוליא and סקיליא, is the subject of a discussion. Zunz maintains the words פוליא and סקיליא and believes that they are references to two regions in Italy, namely Apulia and Sicily. This assumption is somewhat problematic. There are no traditions about a certain 'Apulius' or 'Sicilius' who have founded these two regions. Besides that Zunz does not account for the fact why the other topographic names refer to cities and not to regions as he claims to be the case. Thirdly, why would these two rather unknown 'rulers' be mentioned in the same breath as the legendary Alexander the Great? Buber suggests to adjust the names and read 'Philippus built Philippi' and 'Seleucus built Seleucia' instead. Though the impact of the second ruler, Seleucus, who built a city in Syria, is known, the reason why Philippus should be mentioned is not explained by Buber. Therefore his solution does not provide all the required answers.

In the beginning of 6.2 we find a list of four exiles which took place in eight kingdoms. The seventh kingdom that is mentioned is Ishmael, which Zunz regards as evidence of the fact that the composer lived during Muslim rule. Buber thinks that it rather points to the Arabs. When one looks at the context of this seventh kingdom it strikes one that the kingdoms are mentioned in pairs, thus Media and Persia form a pair and likewise Ishmael and Edom (Rome). The only reason why the exiles are said to have taken place during eight kingdoms is to focus on the eighth kingdom, an explanation of השמיני in the Psalm verse, the Roman Empire. One may conclude that the darshan did not intend to give Ishmael a particular position because it just functions as 'part of a pair'. If this is indeed the case, this passage can be used neither for Buber's arguments nor for those of Zunz.

A number of assumptions have brought the discussion between Zunz and Buber into a stalemate. The first difference of opinion that should be mentioned concerns the way they deal with the division of the comments into two groups, namely 1-118 and 119-150. According to Buber, Zunz did not take this phenomenon as seriously as he should have and therefore he rendered examples from this second selection as invalid because they are clearly from a later period. I believe that Buber was correct about the implications of this distinction. His second solution to Zunz's arguments is less convincing; almost everything that Zunz calls traits of youth is in Buber's view a later addition by some copyist. A few of the examples of Zunz that would plead for a late date of Midrash Tehillim concentrate on grammatical issues, such as the use of אמרו 'they said' in combination with רבותינו 'our rabbis' or חכמים 'wise men' or 'scholars'. There is indeed a difference between רבותינו אמרו or רבותינו שנו and רבותינו אמרו. The

first expression indicates that a quote from the Mishnah or a Talmud will follow. The latter two dictions either paraphrase a Mishnaic or a Talmudic passage¹⁴⁷, a Biblical quote¹⁴⁸, a text taken from another source¹⁴⁹ or it concerns a saying for which no source can be found¹⁵⁰. A similar tendency is found in the derashot containing חכמים אמרו. The majority of these derashot contain a paraphrase¹⁵¹ or actual quote¹⁵² or a reference to another source¹⁵³. In three cases there was probably no parallel in other sources¹⁵⁴. It seems that these expressions certainly had a function in the sense that they 'signalled' that a certain type of quote was going to be inserted into the discourse. Most of the quotes concern the Mishnah or the Talmud and in case of the Talmud the parashiyot containing the quote have to be later than the fifth/sixth century CE.

Midrash Tehillim sometimes imitates Scripture, a feature Zunz calls another sign of lateness. Buber contradicts this by a referral to other, old, Midrashim that also employ a biblical style. In the other cases Zunz claims to have detected sayings that have been taken from other sources as the Talmud Bavli, the Pesiqta de Rav Kahana, Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer and the Tanchuma. Buber argues that the examples are either a late addition, or that the reading is not present in all the manuscripts or that there are too many discrepancies between the text of Midrash Tehillim and the assumed original. In the case of the Pesiqta Rabbati Buber thinks that the process was the reverse of Zunz's opinion: it was the Pesiqta Rabbati that drew upon Midrash Tehillim.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Buber holds to a Palestinian origin and an early date of Midrash Tehillim. He produces the following arguments:

- 1) Midrash Tehillim makes use of the Mishnah, the Tosefta, Talmud Jerushalmi¹⁵⁵, Mechilta, Sifre, Genesis Rabbah, Pesiqta de Rav Kahana, Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer¹⁵⁶, Tanchuma and Targum Onqelos. This however only enables us in establishing the terminus a quo, but it does not indicate the final phase of the Midrash.
- 2) All the Rabbis who are mentioned are Tannaim and Amoraim who lived in Palestine¹⁵⁷. There are only a few exceptions to this phenomenon¹⁵⁸. The phenomenon of quotes stemming from early Rabbis, does not guarantee an early date. Thus Leviticus Rabbah, Ruth Rabbah and Lamentations Rabbah contain no sayings later

¹⁴⁷ As is the case in 22.2, 52.2, 57.2, 59.2, 80.1 and 108.1. A real quote can be found in 60.2.

¹⁴⁸ See 72.4 and 114.2.

¹⁴⁹ 92.11 quotes Genesis Rabbah (Theodor Albeck) 40.17 and Numbers Rabbah (Wilna) 3.1 .

¹⁵⁰ 52.4, 62.4 and 79.1.

¹⁵¹ Paraphrases are found in: 3.3, 6.8, 7.9, 16.1 and 49.3 .

¹⁵² 65.2

¹⁵³ Genesis Rabbah (Wilna only) 65.22

¹⁵⁴ 11.7, 25.14 and 113.3

¹⁵⁵ On pages 11-13 of his introduction, Buber mentions 117 sayings for which the Jerushalmi was the source.

¹⁵⁶ Although these sayings cannot be found in manuscripts Parma and Cambridge , nor were they in the notes of Provençali.

¹⁵⁷ See p. 4 of Buber's introduction.

¹⁵⁸ Braude has made a list of the deviation from this state of affairs, see note 3 on p. 12 of the introduction.

than the Amoraic times and they are not later than the fifth or sixth century¹⁵⁹, but Midrash Samuel, that quotes only early Rabbis, is presumably from the tenth century. However, one has to be aware of the possibility that the anonymous saying may originate from a later period. Later editors may have used the advantage of anonymity to include their own opinions.

3) Another element Buber mentions is the language of Midrash Tehillim¹⁶⁰. It contains many Greek and Latin loanwords and also contains Aramaic passages that can suddenly turn up in the middle of a derasha. The Latin words can also have been inserted in a later period, which is less likely for the Greek loanwords and the parts in Aramaic, unless it is a technique that is used to feign authenticity.

4) The style and mode of the derashot are according to Buber also typically Palestinian¹⁶¹. Unfortunately he does not reveal what kind of features he had in mind, therefore it is impossible to comment on this statement.

5) Another unclear argument is that it appears to bear a Palestinian imprint, but once again Buber does not explain how he came to this conclusion and what elements met the requirements of his definition. He probably thought of language and the way in which the derashot were arranged, but he does not describe this.

The German translator A. Wünsche concurs with Buber's conclusions in his introduction to Midrash Tehillim. He too believes that Zunz's examples are additions made by later redactors¹⁶². Wünsche agrees with Buber that there was more than one editor and Midrash Tehillim slowly grew to the corpus we now have. As examples of stories that occur in more than one derasha Wünsche mentions: 7.6 and 18.3 about the five angels of punishment¹⁶³, 18.25 and 95.3 which is not a real case since 95.3 speaks about God being tried and 18.25 is about the ten trials of Abraham. Furthermore he mentions 18.26 and 103.2 where is shown that a human artist is very much unlike God, 27.7 and 94.5, 56.4 and 100.4 and 91.6 and its parallel in 104.3.

There are quite a few doublets or explanations that have a parallel within Midrash Tehillim be it with some differences in focus or in length. Thus there is a tradition attributed to Rabbi Abbahu stating that the salvation of Israel is also the salvation of the Lord. This tradition is found in Midrash Tehillim 9.14, 13.4 and 91.16. Another doublet concerns the description of troubles being so enormous that Israel nearly drowns in them. In 10.6 there is a short comparison to a man drowning, but in 17.9 there is a mashal about a man and his son who want to cross a river, but a wave rises up and intends to drown the son. This mashal tells about Israel that needs the helping hand of God when the kingdoms rise. In both cases the call for help is voiced by Psalm 10.6. These doublets may suggest that the Midrash waxed over a larger period and that

¹⁵⁹ Stemberger, *Talmud and Midrash*, p. 291, p. 317, p.p. 285-286.

¹⁶⁰ Introduction p. 4.

¹⁶¹ Introduction p. 4. There is no such thing as a Babylonian type of Midrash, so this argument could be applied to any Midrash.

¹⁶² Wünsche, A., *Midrasch Tehillim*, Trier, 1892, Introduction p. 5.

¹⁶³ 7.6 contains the larger explanation where the five angels of punishment are mentioned by name.

certain marks of this growth have not been 'corrected' by editors. Another possibility is that they are just another take on the subject, used to stress elements that are important in more than one case.

The opinions of Zunz and Buber have been criticised since the nineteenth century. Thus Ch. Albeck argues for a later date than Buber did because Midrash Tehillim used Palestinian Midrashim that are later than the ones Buber mentioned in chapter 4. This has to be determined for every single case. Albeck believes that the form and terminology of the most often anonymous proems¹⁶⁴ show signs of deterioration and defectiveness. This poses a fundamental question: what does the ideal typical proem look like and are traces of imperfection really signs of lateness, perhaps the 'perfect proem' could only be achieved after a long period in which the perfect form had to be slowly developed, causing the proems of that time to be 'imperfect'. Albeck also suspects that there were several collections of midrashim on the Psalms, as has been discussed above. It may very well be possible that proems were not the main concern of a certain collection, which happened to be the one Albeck took the deficient proems from.

Another point Albeck made, was that in Midrash Tehillim 'wrong' interpretations of lemmata can be found. Perhaps¹⁶⁵ this phenomenon might in part be explained by the article by Rabinowitz¹⁶⁶ in which he indicates that some of the explanations which at first sight seem farfetched can be understood when seen in the light of a triennial reading cycle. Thus the combination of a Psalm verse with a remote verse can be explained by means of lists of reading portions in which the Psalm and the other chapter are read together on a particular sabbath in the cycle. There are some disadvantages to this assumption, first of all the list Rabinowitz gives, is not complete. The second problem is that there probably did exist a reading cycle of three or three and a half years, but this lectionary was subjected to local customs and could be changed if convenient. J. Heinemann makes this clear in his article 'The triennial Lectionary Cycle'¹⁶⁷, in which he also supposes a kind of eclectic use of the haftarot, which could also be the case for the several parts from the Writings. Besides that it can be argued that not only the Psalms, but also other books from the Writings could have been introduced into the lectionary. Thus we have to be very careful especially because we are dealing with different collections of Midrashim, which can originate from different regions, having different lectionaries.

¹⁶⁴ The words 'proem' and 'petichah' refer to the same homiletical form. There has been some disagreement on which of the two words should be used. Ch. Albeck, J. Heinemann and M. Bregman call this form proem, which almost infuriated A. Goldberg because the name proem suggests that it is an independent sermon which preceded the reading of the Torah. Goldberg, Arnold, 'Versuch über die hermeneutische Präsupposition', p. 1.

¹⁶⁵ It should be noted that this is only a suggestion, I cannot sustain it with evidence since it is not part of my research and I have therefore not dealt with it.

¹⁶⁶ Rabinowitz, L., 'Does Midrash Tehillim reflect the Triennial Cycle of Psalms?', in *Jewish Quarterly Review* N.S. 26, 1935-36, p.p. 349-368

¹⁶⁷ Heinemann, J., 'The triennial Lectionary Cycle' in *Journal for Jewish Studies* 19 (1968) pages 41-41.

Braude's introduction partly returns to the question of the date and origin of Midrash Tehillim. Braude supposes that the period of development begun in the third century and was completed in the thirteenth century. The third century is probably chosen because in Genesis Rabbah and Talmud Jerushalmi¹⁶⁸ is told how the third century Rabbi Judah was reading in a collection called 'Aggadah de Tillim'. In choosing the thirteenth century as closing date for Midrash Tehillim, Braude follows Buber's and Aaron Moses Padua's dating of the second part of Midrash Tehillim¹⁶⁹. According to Braude the 'overwhelming body of Midrash Tehillim goes back to the Talmudic period', although he does not give any proof. It has also not been made clear what country of origin we have to think of. In Braude's opinion this presumably was Palestine because of its links to the reading cycle¹⁷⁰ and the fact that nearly all Rabbis are of Palestinian origin¹⁷¹.

Elbaum in his article in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* mainly describes the different points of view of the scholars mentioned above, without taking a stand of his own. One gets the impression that he agrees with Albeck who argues for a later date than Buber did, although Elbaum admits there is material present that goes back to the third century. Elbaum has some serious doubts concerning the proof that the triennial cycle can explain the content of homilies in Midrash Tehillim. Stemberger also does not hold to Buber's early dating of Midrash Tehillim, although a definitive date of composition is not given. In agreement with Buber and Braude, Palestine is proposed as the place of origin because of the Rabbis and the nature of the aggadic expositions¹⁷².

Neither the approach Buber used, nor the one Zunz advocated have brought us much further. Both project their views and biases onto Midrash Tehillim and thus one can call a certain feature early while the other is convinced that the same phenomenon cannot be but a late feature. Another disadvantage of their approach is that they are concerned mainly about small details, which cannot speak for the whole of the Midrash. Dividing Midrash Tehillim into two parts is indeed a sensible thing to do. The second part is not supported by the manuscripts, the comments are at times taken word for word from the Yalkut and the comments are considerably shorter. A distinctive expression, *זהו שאמר הכתוב*, which will be described in more detail at 6.4.1.3, that is often found in the first part is not used in the second part. Given the dependence of the Yalkut, the thirteenth century most likely was the time when this part was composed. However, this still does not explain why the manuscripts, some of

¹⁶⁸ Genesis Rabbah 33.3, Talmud Jerushalmi Kilaim 9.3 32b and Ketuvot 12.3 35a.

¹⁶⁹ Padua wrote a commentary on Midrash Tehillim that was published in the Warsaw edition of 1865.

¹⁷⁰ Braude refers to this lectionary on p.p. 21-22 and p.p. 31-32.

¹⁷¹ Braude, Introduction, p. 12

¹⁷² Stemberger, *Talmud and Midrash*, p. 323.

which were dated in the sixteenth century, do not have it. The first part is considerably older and I concur with Zunz, Albeck and Braude who advocate a late date for finalisation. In my view there is no convincing evidence that Midrash Tehillim was composed in Southern Italy. With the current state of research a Palestinian origin is likely, though a different origin cannot be ruled out beforehand.

6 Structuring elements in Midrash Tehillim

6.1 The base-text

Midrash Tehillim is an exegetical Midrash that is centered around the Book of Psalms. The Psalms provide structure to Midrash Tehillim in a number of ways. The intent must have been to offer a commentary from Psalm 1 through Psalm 150; i.e. every Psalm of this Biblical book would be taken into account. Within the Psalms a subdivision into five books can be discerned and this structuring element has also been adopted. The Psalms are given in the biblical order and no Psalm has been left out. Also within the commentaries on an individual Psalm the Biblical order of the verses is maintained to a large extent. This lemmatic approach can be found throughout the Midrash. Even the comments that do not address a Psalm verse directly, such as 22.12 that begins with Songs of Songs 6.10, display this lemmatic approach.

All the manuscripts display a systematic commentary on the Psalms in the sense that the comments follow the order of the Psalms as given in the Bible and that every Psalm is treated. One would have expected that the Manuscripts would have offered comments on all the Psalms, which for an unknown reason is not the case. Also the division of the Psalms into five books has been preserved in Midrash Tehillim. This is done in two ways, the first being a literal division which is reflected by the Manuscripts. At the end of a book of Psalms a remark states which book has ended. This may be done by simple stating סליק פרק רביעי, 'end of the fourth section' (Parma), or נשלם פרק רביעי, 'the fourth section has been completed' (Vatican 81). Cambridge does not only mention the end of the fourth section, but also counts the number of parashiyot (פרשיות יז) and marks the start of the next book (ספר ה). The knowledge and acceptance of this division is linked to the Davidic authorship, which constitutes a second way of preserving the five books. David was not of an impeccable reputation and this may influence the way the Psalms were looked upon. It seems only logical that the first book defends David on several occasions and he, the writer of five books of Psalms, is compared to Moses who wrote the five books of the Torah. The equating of David to Moses has two effects. First of all is confirmed that the Psalms are a legitimate object of study. The second effect is that David gains authority. This is not only done for the sake of the Psalms, but also for the statements he makes as '(implied) interpreter' within Midrash Tehillim. In a number of petichot¹⁷³ David's motives for composing a Psalm are given. These explanations include David's own time and situation as well as those of his people Israel in later times. David is at times also portrayed as an intercessor for Israel, in fact another feature he has in common with Moses, and also for this purpose it is important that David is authoritative.

The third structuring element is that of the Psalms, each Psalm with its commentaries forms a 'chapter'. Within these chapters we find smaller units, which are already present in the manuscripts. The boundaries between these units, by Buber identified with כ, נ, etc., are artificial and it is sometimes better to read two or more of these units

¹⁷³ See 6.4.1.3.

together because they are connected¹⁷⁴. Such a unit will begin with the quotation of the lemma, in the first unit this usually is the first verse of the Psalm, which makes the darshan dependent upon this verse. This lemma is then followed by one or more comments. Typically only the first verses of a Psalm are commented on¹⁷⁵, but sometimes verses from the middle or from the end of a Psalm occur as well. For example in the comments on Psalm 94 verses 1, 13, 15, 16 and 23 are addressed. In nine instances a verse, usually the first verse, is repeated in one of the last passages on that particular Psalm so that the beginning and the end of the passages comment on the same verse. This phenomenon occurs in 4.13, 7.13, 8.8, 9.17, 10.8, 16.13, 30.6, 39.3 and 110.1. At times the lemma is not repeated at the beginning of a passage that deals with the same lemma, in that case it is introduced by דבר אחר 'another case / explanation' that is also often found within a passage to introduce another opinion. This occurs for example in 27.2, 31.2, 31.3, 45.3 and 59.2.

As is customary in Midrash, the comments and opinions are illustrated or demonstrated by Scriptural verses that can be introduced by several formula's such as שנאמר 'as has been said' and כדכתיב and כתוב 'as has been written' and by the abbreviation הה"ד (הדא הוא דכתיב) 'it is this what Scripture says'. The statements are at times attributed to Rabbinic authorities, mostly Palestinian. There is also a large group of anonymous statements and in this case the question concerning their origin arises. Is this perhaps the redactor(s) who gave shape to the collection(s) of derashot, or do they form part of a tradition and did they just happen to be anonymous or are we dealing with a combination of these two possibilities?

6.2 The language

Midrash Tehillim is mainly written in Rabbinic Hebrew¹⁷⁶. A typical feature is using the final mem and nun interchangeably, which can even stand side by side as in כשהמלאכים מקלסין (19.7) and הכוכבים נכנסין (22.4). In the first example another feature can be detected, namely the frequent use of ו as conjunction which is found in almost every unit. Also the genitive particle של is often used, over a 1000 times in Midrash Tehillim it stands on its own but it is also used with a pronominal suffix such as שלי 'my' (1.15, 3.3, 5.1, 6.5, 6.10, 9.13, 12.1, 17.8, 18.32, 20.1, 22.1, 27.1, 31.9, 58.1, 61.3, 67.3, 87.4, 100.1 and 102.2) and שלו 'his', which occurs over 60 times (for example in 2.2, 2.5, 10.3, 15.6, 20.10, 28.2, 38.1, 72.2 and 114.3). Thus the combination of a word with suffix like סוסי as found in Biblical Hebrew is replaced by

¹⁷⁴ See for example 113 where the passages form an ongoing explanation.

¹⁷⁵ This is another difference with the Targum on the Psalms which, as a Targum should, comments on each and every verse.

¹⁷⁶ In fact two different descriptions, namely Mishnaic Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew, are used to describe this language. For example M.H. Segal, M. Bar-Asher, E.Y. Kutscher and Stemberger use the term Mishnaic Hebrew, while others like A. Sáenz-Badillos and M. Pérez Fernández use the term Rabbinic Hebrew. Segal, M.H., *A grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*, Oxford, 1927. Bar-Asher, M., *Studies in Mishnaic Hebrew*, Scripta Hierosolymitana 37, Jerusalem, 1997. So Kutscher in his article on the Hebrew language in the Encyclopaedia Judaica. Stemberger, *Talmud and Midrash*, p. 101. Pérez Fernández, M., *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew*, Leiden, 1999 and Sáenz-Badillos, A., *A history of the Hebrew language*, Cambridge, 1993.

סוס שלי. Also the personal pronouns display some shifts; the form אנכי is found in Midrash Tehillim, but אני prevails. The same holds true for אנחנו that occurs now and then, but that is mainly substituted by אנו. The interchange between final mem and final nun is also present in the third persons plural that have become הם or הן. The object-marker את with suffix can have demonstrative value¹⁷⁷, for example in אותו 'that day' (25.7, 40.4, 41.4, 46.1, 74.1, 90.3, 96.2, 97.2). The style of Midrash Tehillim's language can be best described as straightforward, not oversimplified, nor very sophisticated.

In over 100 passages of Midrash Tehillim Aramaic is used. The majority is Late Galilean Aramaic, similar to that of Targum Lamentations and Lamentations Rabbati, which narrows the Aramaic down to the seventh or eighth century CE. However, in a few cases the Aramaic is similar to that of the Mishnah¹⁷⁸, Talmud Bavli¹⁷⁹ and Genesis Rabbah¹⁸⁰ which contain parallels. The majority of the Aramaic in Midrash Tehillim concerns just a few words that appear within a unit that is otherwise written in Hebrew. It can therefore not be compared to a work like Lamentations Rabbah 'in which Hebrew stands alongside Galilean Aramaic'¹⁸¹ and that often shifts between the two languages. These smaller groups of Aramaic words often concern numbers such as תרתין in 1.17, 15.1, 16.7, 16.12, 18.8, 19.13, 22.8, 78.11, 78.13, תליתאי in 12.2, 22.20, 103.7 and שיתא in 19.14. Also combinations with לית 'there is not' in 4.8, 7.6 and 30.1 and אית 'there is' as found in 1.21, 5.11 and 16.1 occur. One sees the question מאי טעמא 'what is 'the argument?'' used as introduction to the reasoning behind a certain explanation, see for example 16.1, 41.2, 64.1, 101.4 and 103.3. A fourth unifying element is the presence of proverbs or fictional teachings, the clearest example hereof is נפשי מן דכלתא ועיינא מן קרחתא '(we notice) life when it is ending, the eye when it is enflamed' which occurs in two passages, namely 90.19 and 91.5 which supports its status as proverb. Other examples are found in 1.21 כהדא איסתירי 'like this coin in a bottle says "kish kish"' and in 1.22, 7.3, 22.20, 28.4, 32.3, 51.2 and 90.17. The last common use of the single Aramaic words is connected to the practice of translating Hebrew Scripture into Aramaic. These instances are introduced by the word דמתרגמינן or a similar expression, as in 18.7, 18.32, 18.34, 48.5, 56.2, 76.3, 77.1, 78.9, 78.12, 81.7 and 106.5.

The larger Aramaic parts bear a narrative character and are mostly cast in *ma'asim* and fictional stories. These parts are not always fully in Aramaic, see for example the *ma'aseh* in 11.7 that begins in Aramaic and then switches to Hebrew. The fictional stories can be subdivided into two categories; the entirely fictional story and the story in which biblical figures feature. To the first subcategory belongs the story on Falsehood (שיקרא) and Vexation (פתחא) that enter Noah's ark as a pair (7.7). To the second subcategory belong the story about David who is tricked by Satan into the land

¹⁷⁷ Sáenz-Badillos, *Hebrew language*, p. 186.

¹⁷⁸ Mishnah Yebamot 6.2 in 2.1.

¹⁷⁹ Sanhedrin 10A in 1.15, Sanhedrin 95A in 18.30, Bava Batra 75A in 97.2, Bava Metsia 5B in 1.22, Gittin 68A in 78.12, Berachot 61A in 25.11.

¹⁸⁰ 18.1 for Midrash Tehillim 25.11 and 65.22 for 11.7.

¹⁸¹ Stemberger, *Midrash and Talmud*, p. 285.

of the Philistines (18.30) and Solomon's search for the Shamir (78.12) and the *bat qol* that warns Nebuchadnezzar (79.2). The *ma'asim* address many different topics, for example the disbelief of Rabbi Jochanan's student who is punished with death (87.2), the poverty of Rabbi Simeon ben Chalafta (92.8), the peace that exist between a lion, a dog and a Ethiopian gnat (104.19). Judge Alexandros is favourable towards a robber who is also named Alexandros (4.3), a matron curses a pious man who returned her lost golden box in Aramaic¹⁸² (12.1) and Rabbi Jose wants to console a heretic whose son has died (2.11). Some other *ma'asim* are on Rabbi Akiva's daughter in law (59.3), the two nephews who are both going to Gan Eden (11.7), a man who decides to wait for the light of the sun and likewise one should wait for the redemption by God (36.6) and two rabbis who walk in the valley of Arbel and compare the redemption to the dawn (22.13). Except for the mashal on the corpulent man and the ass in 105.11, the other meshalim are not fully in Aramaic. In 20.4 bystanders who try to console a woman in labour speak Aramaic and the mashal in 116.8 shows a king that speaks a few words in Aramaic.

Our Midrash contains quite a few loanwords¹⁸³ from Greek and Latin. In his Introduction¹⁸⁴ Buber lists about 600 foreign words¹⁸⁵, of which the majority is Greek. These Greek and Latin loanwords appear on their own, surrounded by Hebrew words and are at times introduced by a remark such as בלשון יון 'in the Greek language'. This is often done when the darshan reaches for a Greek or Latin word to explain a (rare) Hebrew word. Thus for example in 77.3 the word האפס is explained by means of the Greek word as απεξ of the verb αφιημι (to forgive, to pardon). The majority of loanwords is used without further introduction, but the fact that there are variant ways of writing them suggests that they may have become less familair.

The Latin words can be divided into a few categories: war-related such as scutum (1.4 shield), duces (3.3), legio (5.7), then there is a legal category with words including matron (17.14, 45.5), patron (2.4, 4.3, 55.6, 88.2), quaestionarius (6.3 executioner), scriptor (103.7), quaestor (103.7 'seeker of facts', judge), caesar (93.6) and words referring to Roman culture in general like sebaccus (90.5 tallow-candle), pluma (3.3 pillow), circus (14.3, 18.12). The Greek loanwords can be divided into similar categories. The legal section is quite big and includes words that are to regulate everyday's life. Here words such as επιτροπος (24.5 trustee, guardian), συνηγορος (81.6 an advocate), διαθηκη (1.5 testament), δημοσιον (3.3 state property) and συγκλητος (4.4 a summoned council, used for the בית דין) are found. Words associated with war are among others αρχων (4.3 ruler, chief) and στρατιος (92.12 army). The largest group is formed by words that have not so much in common, such

¹⁸² Aramaic is also spoken by Pharaoh in 2.4 and by wicked Rome in 10.6.

¹⁸³ Indispensable reference works are: Krauss, S., *Griechische und Lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum*, 2 Vols, Berlin, 1898-1899. Lieberman, S., *Greek in Jewish Palestine: studies in the life and manners of Jewish Palestine in the II-IV centuries C.E.*, Philadelphia 1942. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: studies in the literary transmission beliefs and manners of Palestine in the 1st century B.C.E. – 4th century C.E.*, New York 1950. Sperber, S., *A dictionary of Greek and Latin legal terms in rabbinic literature*, Jerusalem, 1984.

¹⁸⁴ P.p. 46-53.

¹⁸⁵ The list also contains spelling variants, which reduces the number as well.

as στροβίλος (2.16 pine), εικονιον (17.8 an icon), ευγενής (1.6 well-born), ωνος (104.21 price paid) and σιτωνής (23.4 whole sale provision dealer).

6.3 The exegetical perspective

Most Biblical books have a certain unity both in form and in content. This enables a darshan to use a certain reading strategy for that particular Biblical book. Thus the strategy of filling in the gaps can be applied to large parts of Genesis, and a certain debate style can be used for dealing with the legal aspects of Deuteronomy. The Book of Psalms is a collection of, mostly, independent units. Their diversity in content and form does not allow a darshan to use one single reading strategy for the entire collection of Psalms. However, this does not imply that there is no coherence in the exegesis at all, it just happens in different ways. As argued in 6.1 the darshan is to comment on a Psalm verse, which limits his choices to a great extent. But as it turns out, not every Psalm verse is commented on so here the darshan has the opportunity to make some selection of verses¹⁸⁶. The darshan is not restricted to give only one explanation per verse, on the contrary, with the words דבר אחר, another explanation can be introduced and this can be repeated over and over. Midrash is renowned for its tendency to offer non-literal explanations and for this the darshan has a number of tools wherewith he can tease out interpretations. Here Midrash Tehillim does not differ from other Midrashim and it employs techniques that are typical for the genre of Midrash. There is no progress in the consecutive units in the sense that they culminate in a certain conclusion arrived at after a number of units. Coherence takes place within the units and consists of selection on theme, verbal tallies, and also on form. The derashot can be highly associative and their purpose is not always to draw out a deeper meaning out of the biblical text, or to fill in the gaps. The verses are regarded as a point of departure for an exploration of the context wherein they were uttered, but more often they will generate an exegesis that is only loosely connected to their 'original meaning'.

The impact of the tools the darshan could use differs: for example by casting the comment in the form of a petichah another verse¹⁸⁷ is introduced which can influence the explanation of the lemma from the beginning to the end. This verse taken from elsewhere in Scripture can influence the units following that petichah, as is for example the case in 22.3 where it has become the lemma. Also the practice of back-referencing can change the direction of the comment considerably, see for example 18.25 where Abraham's ten trials dominate the unit. Then there are tools that can stand on their own and be the entire explanation, but that can also be part of a petichah or a series of comments. The ma'aseh, a story that has the appearance of a

¹⁸⁶ The first verse is always commented on, the other verses in the beginning of the Psalm are also often treated, but for the second half of the Psalm the darshan seems to have had a great freedom.

¹⁸⁷ The remote verse. The petichah will be discussed in greater detail in 6.4.1.

true anecdote¹⁸⁸, but that in fact may be entirely artificial like the story in 92.8 that relates how Rabbi Simeon ben Chalafta came across a precious stone that appeared from nowhere, belongs to this type of tool. Also the several types of comparison should be mentioned in this respect. There is for example the comparison introduced by בנוהג שבעולם 'according to the custom of the world' that has several functions, thus it can explain a certain action (2.15), may compare God to a human person (17.3) or contrast a human's actions with those of God (5.11). The usually shorter negative comparison consists of the words בשר ודם (a...of flesh and blood)....אלא הקב"ה (but the Holy One blessed be He). Here the actions of a human, usually a king, are contrasted with those of God. The qal wa-chomer is comparing two situations that are not equal. If for the inferior case can be argued that a certain principle is valid, that principle certainly can be applied to the second, more significant, case. In 31.6 the measure of punishment and the measure of goodness are compared to one another. If the measure of punishment has already sixteen ways in which it smites, the measure of goodness, which is of a different and better quality, will certainly have more than sixteen ways in which it manifests itself. The mashal should also be mentioned here, although it differs in form and function from the other two types of comparison. Its more complicated nature, function and interaction with the lemma will be examined in 6.4.2.

The tools mentioned thus far, with exception of the mashal, display a certain distance to the lemma. Next to these there are exegetical techniques that have more interaction with the lemma. Thus questions can be asked concerning the moment of composition or the intent behind the Psalm. Rabbinic authorities may be quoted, or an explanation on the given lemma may be attributed to a Rabbinic authority. These explanations by tradents are certainly not always restricted to the lemma and may just as well present any kind of exegetical remark. The lemma is at times explained in a deictic way, as in 17.6 where we find several times a quote plus explanation like בלא שפתי מרמה זו תפלת ערבית. Next to this there are numerous techniques that deal with only a part of the lemma. In the comments on Psalm 6.1, both in 6.1 and 6.2, the number eight, present in the lemma, למנצח על השמינית, is taken as a point of departure. In 6.1 Psalm 119.164 has been brought into the picture by the introduction זהו שאמר הכתוב, which forces the comment into the direction of the word, שבע, seven. The number seven is then interpreted in a number of ways and at the end of these interpretations the connection to the eighth, that is the eighth commandment, circumcision, given to Abraham, is established. David reflected on the circumcision and decided to dedicate a Psalm to it and does so by allusion¹⁸⁹. The fact that Psalm 6 does not praise circumcision is irrelevant. In 6.2 another interpretation of the lemma is given and it is based on a play on the numbers four and eight that are taken to refer to four exiles and eight kingdoms.

¹⁸⁸ Originally this form was intended to convey a halachic principle, either a ruling by a judge in court or the conduct of a halachic scholar. The exemplary behaviour of such a scholar would be the practical application of a halachah he had received or one he taught himself. In our Midrash the halachic dimension is no longer the main characteristic of a *ma'aseh* and the form has become an anecdote about a Rabbi or an anonymous person. Parts of the *ma'asim* found in our Midrash contain Aramaic phrases.

¹⁸⁹ The remainder of this unit is not present in all the manuscripts. The importance of circumcision is stressed and it is equalled to the study of the Torah.

This anonymous comment uses Daniel 2.32, the description of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream, to arrive at the number eight. This is done by taking the body parts that come in pairs as a reference to two kingdoms of one exile. Mentioning four of these pairs results in eight kingdoms. The head, breast and the belly of the image are neglected because they cannot be used in the exegesis. This type of explanation is also used regularly in Midrash Tehillim. As one can see, this kind of explanation is not literal and has a somewhat playful character, although the interpretations themselves are very serious. Another reason why a certain verse is quoted is that it contains verbal tallies with the lemma. In 6.7, commenting on Psalm 6.2, the intersecting verses contain words similar to one or more of the words¹⁹⁰ of the lemma אל באפך תוכיחני ואל בחמתך תיסרני. In 6.9 another wordplay can be found on עשה (it consumed) and עש (moth). This kind of play on cognate roots, also found in גבור 'hero' and נתגברה '(the current) rose' in 17.9, is called paranomasia.

Replacing one or two consonants like רעה / ראה can change the meaning of a word. At times this introduced by the construction אל תקריאלא 'do not read...., but' as is done in 9.1. Similarly a different vocalisation can also be used as an exegetical technique. In 8.1 the word למנצח, that at first has to do with an instruction related to the Psalm and that can be translated as 'for the choirmaster', needs to be translated differently at the end of the unit namely as 'to Him who is victorious'. In 8.8 the meaning of למנצח also changes into 'to Him who is victorious'. In both passages the words על הגתית are also modified. In the Psalm verse על הגתית may have been an instruction to play on the Gittite¹⁹¹ (lyre), but in 8.1 and 8.8 it is abbreviated to על הגת 'on the winepress', which is then connected to the eschatological image of God punishing the four kingdoms, that is treading upon them like one treads the winepress. Another way of rearranging words is found in the comments on Psalm 9.1 that deal with the words עלמות לבן 'to the voice of young women', the most apparent case is found in 9.4 where it is understood as על מות לבן 'concerning the death of the son'. A highly artificial technique is that of the notarikon. This principle uses every letter of a word as the initial letter of another words. The word in 3.3 נמרצת is used to form the following words: נואף מואבי רוצח צורר תועבה.

Numbers play a role in several ways. A rather evident rule is that a plural always signifies two or more. In 6.6 Psalm 6.11 (ישבו יבשו רגע) 'all my enemies will be ashamed and they will be very much dismayed (they will return and they will be ashamed suddenly)' is explained while making use of the number two. There are two different explanations, one in the name of 'the Rabbis' and one by Rabbi Joshua ben Levi. The first comment depicts God as giving the righteous a tour through Gehenna to show them vacant places where they might have ended up if they would not have been involved in doing good deeds. The reverse also happens: God shows the wicked vacant places in Gan Eden. In retrospect one can conclude that this is the shame the wicked will have to face. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi's approach is based on grammar. The fact that יבשו appears twice in this verse is taken to suggest that the

¹⁹⁰ Underlined in the quote.

¹⁹¹ Brown, F., Driver, S., Briggs, C., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Peabody, 2001, p. 388.

wicked will be confronted with a double curse. In parallel to the first comment on this verse, the reverse is also shown; Israel will be blessed with a double blessing and the verse that illustrates this contains a twofold denial of future shame for Israel. Or in the comment of 62.1 on Isaiah 26.4 where the plural for ‘worlds’ עולמים is found the darshan applies this to the present world and the world to come. The gematria, albam and atbash generate artificial meanings and it is clear that the darshan has been manipulating and puzzling in order to reach the desired effect. Gematria is the practice of taking the sum of the numerical value of every letter of a word and using the outcome as a number associated with another entity. In this system א=1, ב=2, and ת=400. The numerical value of the word בך is twentytwo and this can refer to the twentytwo letters of the alphabet. Albam, in itself a mnemonic, replaces the value of the א with that of the ל and thus becomes 30, the ב takes the value of the מ and becomes 40 et cetera. Atbash is also based on replacing numerical values, here the א takes the value of the ת and becomes 400, the ב takes the value of the ש and becomes 300. Of these three techniques the gematria is by far the most popular.

6.4 Literary structures

Two literary structures that were mentioned in passing in the previous section deserve more attention because they are commonly used in Midrash Tehillim and because they do not always represent the ‘ideal typical form’. These two structures, the petichah and the mashal, will be discussed in further detail below.

6.4.1 The Petichah

6.4.1.1 Petichot in general

Already in early aggadic Midrashim such as Genesis Rabbah and Lamentations Rabbah petichot are found. The name of this rhetorical device is derived from one of its opening sentences that reads רבי...פתח “Rabbi x....opened”. This introduction is followed by a verse that is usually taken from the Writings or the Prophets. This verse can be called petichah-verse or ‘remote verse’ because it often is from a different part of the Bible than the verse that is being commented on, the pericope verse, that is usually a verse from the Torah. Currently there are two explanations for this preference for a verse. The first idea, among others inspired by W. Bacher¹⁹², is that the petichah demonstrates the unity of the Bible. In this scenario the Torah is present in the seder reading, the Prophets are present in the haftarah and the Writings in the petichah. It should be noted that this vision on the petichah places it within a liturgical setting. Goldberg wonders why the petichah itself has not combined the elements of Torah, Writings and the Prophets, but consists of a combination of only two out of three parts of the Bible. According to Goldberg¹⁹³ the explanation should be sought in

¹⁹² Bacher, W., *Die Proömien der alten jüdischen Homilie: Beitrag zur Geschichte der jüdischen Schriftauslegung und Homilethik*, Leipzig, 1913, p. 14.

¹⁹³ Goldberg, Arnold, ‘Versuch über die hermeneutische Präsupposition und Struktur der Petiha, p. 6.

the fact that Scripture was spoken by God Himself, or inspired by the Holy Spirit. Thus every Scriptural verse was considered revelation and was therefore applicable to all situations, including those of a different Biblical book¹⁹⁴. The second explanation, brought forward by M.S. Jaffee, is that the petichot were created in an academic setting.

The first group, represented by J. Heinemann, claims that the petichah was created in a liturgical setting and that it played a role in the Sabbath service. It could have served as an introduction to the sermon, or as an introduction to the reading of the Torah. J. Heinemann suggested¹⁹⁵ that the sermons have to be identified with the introductions to the reading portion, which in my opinion is the most plausible explanation of the nature of the petichah. Heinemann shows in his article that those who argue that the proems were introductions to the sermons are not able to explain the upside-down character of the petichah nor can they show where the sermons themselves have gone. Even if one would call the exegetical parts following the petichah a sermon, then it is nearly impossible to explain why there is a sudden shift in style. According to this first group the intention of the petichah was to provide the audience with an introduction to the Torah portion with which they were already familiar due to the reading cycle that was in use. The people knew what to expect, but because of the presence of the remote verse at the beginning of the exposition their curiosity was provoked, their minds were in suspense and they were anxious to know how the two verses would be brought together. The petichah did not have to be very long because it was to be followed by the Torah portion of that day.

The second opinion, represented by Jaffee¹⁹⁶, denies any liturgical function of the petichah and believes that most of the petichot are artificial works that are products of the intelligentsia. Their only intention was to pose a riddle for the readers and to demonstrate their erudition. Jaffee argues that a petichah consists of 5 literary units:

1. The superscription which can be 'Rabbi x opened' or 'This is what Scripture says'.
2. The Scriptural citation (remote verse) and an explanatory pericope.
3. A sequence of independent pericopae related to the verse of part 2.
4. Citation of the verse of part 2 and an explanatory pericope.
5. Citation of a final scriptural verse unrelated to the verse of part 2.

¹⁹⁴ For Goldberg the petichah did not necessarily have to be situated in a liturgical setting, but at the same time he rejects an academic setting as becomes clear in 'Versuch über die hermeneutische Präsupposition' p. 59. Goldberg's explanation is rather general and can be applied to all types of Midrash.

¹⁹⁵ 'The Proem in Aggadic Midrashim: A Form-Critical Study' in: *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 22, Jerusalem 1971, pages 100-122.

¹⁹⁶ Jaffee, M.S., 'The Midrashic Proem: Towards the description of Rabbinic Exegesis' in: *Approaches to Ancient Judaism Volume 4*. Green, W.S. (editor), Chico 1983. Pages 95-112

His major point is that the third part intentionally does not seem to have a connection, besides the link to the remote verse, to the other four parts. This was done to create confusion, which is according to Jaffee a very important element of a petichah. He formulates his statement as follows: 'These substantive discontinuities among the basic components of the proem indicate that the form is an exegetical construct intended to create tension among its elements, even while it links them within a common thematic agendum¹⁹⁷.'

There are some critical observations to be made to this second line of thought. First of all it is not able to account for some important features of the petichah. The upside-down aspect is only partly explained by the assumption that the audience should be confronted with a riddle that they have to solve, a complicated mashal could have had the same effect. Another unanswered question is that of the reason of the brevity of the proem. The majority of the petichot is rather short, but the 'academic theory' does not provide an explanation for this phenomenon. Finally, this theory fails to demonstrate why the petichah was singled out as a medium to demonstrate one's skills in writing.

The place of the petichah and therewith its function differs. In Lamentations Rabbah we find a cluster of petichot on Lamentations 1.1 before the comments on Lamentations begin¹⁹⁸. This collection might have been intended for preachers since the petichot do not form an integral part of the commentary on Lamentations. In other texts, the petichot are found at the beginning of the parasha for which they were intended. Some petichot are so short that one can doubt whether they could have served in this form as an introduction to Scripture, in fact they look as a kind of directions for preachers so that they had a frame to work with.

Goldberg seems a little indecisive about the background of the petichah. He points out that there is little known about the Sitz im Leben of the petichah and suggests that we have only knowledge about its Sitz in der Literatur. On the other hand, he refers to one who delivers a sermon (Prediger) and clearly rejects the 'academic background' when he writes 'Die Petiha wurde weitgehend unverständlich, ja unsinnig, und konnte nur noch als Spielerei rabbinischen Intellekts oder als Ausgeburd associativen Denken wahrgenommen werden. Dass sie dies nicht ist, meine ich hinreichend gezeigt zu haben¹⁹⁹'. Goldberg's main contribution to the study of the petichah lies in his detailed analysis of the ideal typical form of a petichah. As Lenhard²⁰⁰ showed extensively there may be more than one type of petichah. I concur with her that this option of more than one type of petichah should be taken into consideration. In my opinion there are at least two types of petichah, a 'regular' form that ends with the parasha-verse and a circular form that ends with the petichah-verse. In addition to this it seems that the rules for a petichah were either not tied down or were to be applied in a rather flexible manner for which I will provide some examples.

¹⁹⁷ Jaffee, 'The Midrashic Proem'. p. 105

¹⁹⁸ There are also some petichot scattered through the text.

¹⁹⁹ Goldberg, 'Versuch über die hermeneutische Präsupposition', p. 59.

²⁰⁰ In her book *Die Rabbinische Homilie* Lenhard discerns many types of petichot.

6.4.1.2 An example: Leviticus Rabbah 13.2

In order to understand any deviations in a petichah, we first need to establish its 'ideal' basic structure and characteristics, which will then be compared to the petichot that are found in Midrash Tehillim. For the sake of clarity I will demonstrate the basic structure of a petichah, using Leviticus Rabbah (Margulies) parasha 13.2 as an example.

ר' שמעון בן יוחי פתח עמד וימודד ארץ ראה ויתר גוים וגו' (חבקוק ג, ו). מדד הקב"ה בכל האומות ולא מצא אומה שהיא ראויה לקבל את התורה אלא ישראל. ומדד הקב"ה בכל הדורות ולא מצא דור הראוי לקבל את התורה אלא דור המדבר. מדד הקב"ה בכל ההרים ולא מצא הר שתשרה שכינה עליו אלא הר המורייה. מדד הקב"ה בכל עיירות ולא מצא עיר שיבנה בה בית המקדש אלא ירושלם. מדד הקב"ה בכל ההרים ולא מצא הר שתינתן עליו תורה אלא הר סיני. מדד הקב"ה בכל הארצות ולא מצא ארץ שהיא ראוייה לישראל אלא ארץ ישראל. הה"ד עמד וימודד ארץ. ראה ויתר גוים. רב אמי התיר דמן התיר ממונן. התיר דמן, לא תחיה כל נשמה (דברים כ, טז). התיר ממונן, ואכלת את שלל איביך (דברים כ יד). ר' יוחנן אמי הקפיצן לתוך גהנם כמה דאת אמי לנתר בהם על הארץ (ויקרא יא, כא). ר' הונא רבה דציפורי אמי התיר זונים שלהם, הה"ד מוסר מלכים פתח ויאסור אזור במתניהם (איוב יב, יח). עולא ביראה בשי' ר' שמעון בן יוחי לאחד שיצא לגורן וכלבו וחמורו עמו, הטעין לחמורו חמש סאין ולכלבו שתיים. והיה אותו הכלב מלחית. העביר ממנו אחת והיה מלחית, שתיהן והיה מלחית. אמי ליה טעון לית את טעון ואת מלחית. כך אפילו שבע מצוות שקיבלו עליהן בני נח כיון שלא יכלו לעמוד בהן עמדו ופרקום על ישראל. אמי' ר' תנחום בר חנילאי לרופא שנכנס לבקר שני חולים, אחד יש בו כדי לחיים ואחד אין בו כדי לחיים. זה שיש בו כדי לחיים אמי ליה דבר פלוי ודבר פלוי לא יאכל, וזה שאין בו כדי לחיים אמי להם כל דבעי הבו ליה. כך אומות העולם שאינן לחיי העולם הבא כירק עשב נתתי לכם את כל (בראשית ט, ג), אבל ישראל שהן לחיי העולם הבא זאת החיה אשר תאכלו מכל הבהמה אשר על הארץ (ויקרא יא, ב).

Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai opened *He stood, He measured the earth, He beheld and drove the nations asunder* (Habakuk 3.6) The Holy One blessed be He measured all the nations and did not find a nation worthy to receive the Torah except for Israel. The Holy One blessed be He measured all the generations, but did not find a generation worthy to receive the Torah except the generation of the wilderness. The Holy One blessed be He measured all the mountains and He did not find a mountain on which the Shechinah would rest except for Mount Moriah. The Holy One blessed be He measured all cities and He did not find a city in which the Temple would be built, except for Jerusalem. The Holy One blessed be He measured all the mountains and He did not find a mountain on which the Torah would be given, except for Mount Sinai. The Holy One blessed be He measured all the countries and did not find a country worthy for Israel except for Erets Israel. This is what has been written: *He stood, He measured the earth.*

He beheld and drove the nations asunder. Rav said: He declared their blood permitted, He declared their wealth permitted. He declared their blood permitted. *You must not let live any soul* (Deuteronomy 20.16). He declared their wealth permitted. *And you may eat of the spoil of your enemies* (Deuteronomy 20.14). Rabbi Jochanan said: He will make them leap into Gehenna, as Scripture says: *to make them leap over the earth* (Leviticus 11.21). Rabbi Huna of Sephoris said: He untied their belts. This is what has been written: *He opened the girdles of kings, He tied a waistcloth around their waist* (Job 12.18). Ulla Bira'ah said in the name of Simeon ben Jochai: (a mashal) to a man

who went out to the threshing floor and his dog and his donkey were with him. He loaded his donkey with five se'ah and his dog with two. The dog was panting. (The man) removed one from him and he was (still) panting. (After removing) both of them, he was panting. He said to him: You are not loaded with a load, yet you are panting. Likewise the sons of Noah although they accepted (only) seven commandments, (the time came) when they were not able to stand in them they stood and removed them (and transferred them) to Israel.

Rabbi Tanchum bar Chanilah said: (it may be compared) to a physician who entered to visit two sick (people). One did not have as much as was required for life and one did have as much as was required for life. To the one that did have as much as was required for life he said: 'This thing and that thing you may not eat.' Concerning the one that did not have as much as was required for life, he said to them (who were with him) 'Bring him whatever he asks.' Likewise the nations of the earth, who are (not destined) for life of the world to come, *Like the greenness of the plants I give you everything* (Genesis 9.3), but Israel, that is (destined) for the life of the world to come, *this is of the living (animals), of all the animals which are on the earth which you may eat* (Leviticus 11.2).

A petichah may have an 'opening sentence' which forms the introduction to a verse from either the Writings or the Prophets. This verse is often called 'remote verse' or 'petichah verse'. The aim of the petichah is to begin with the remote verse and to end with the first, or second, verse of a parasha, which is achieved through a series of comments. This verse is called parasha verse or pericope verse. In our example the first line reads *ר' שמעון בן יוחי פתח* 'Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai opened'. The second element of the petichah is the remote verse. Parasha 13 has a verse from the Prophets as remote verse, namely Habakuk 3.6, *He stood, He measured the earth, He beheld and drove the nations asunder*. The remote verse and the parasha verse often do not seem to have anything in common, though there may be similarities in words or in theme. One of the strategies is to exploit the fact that a word can have several meanings, which is exactly what has been done in our example. The exegetical part that connects the remote verse to the parasha-verse is the 'body' of a petichah. It is often called 'charizah', since here several scriptural verses are strung together like beads. This part should contain at least one comment, but it often consists of several comments which do not have to be in agreement with each other. Our example first has a comment on Habakuk 3.6, which depicts the Lord as searching for the appropriate nation and appropriate generation to receive His Torah. He also looks for worthy places for His Torah, His Temple and His people. The same type of formulation is used for every single case. No biblical proof is brought forward, except for the beginning of the petichah verse. Rav's comment on the second part of the petichah verse is mainly based on a wordplay *נָתַר* 'to drive asunder' in the petichah verse and *וַתֵּר* 'to permit' in Deuteronomy 20.16. The third comment is by Rabbi Jochanan who refers to another meaning of *נָתַר* namely 'to leap'. He quotes the parasha verse, Leviticus 11.21. Rabbi Huna uses yet another meaning of *נָתַר*, 'to loosen', although this is not the exact verb that is used in Job 12.18 which functions as proof. The wordplays are then put aside and by means of two meshalim the connection to the pericope-verse is built up. Ulla Bira'ah tells a mashal about a man who gives his donkey and his dog loads to carry. The dog is not able to carry his load, therefore the

owner transfers the burden to the donkey. A similar situation can be detected in the real world where the nations were given seven commandments, which they could not keep, therefore they were given to Israel. The last comment is by Rabbi Tanchum bar Chanilah who also brings forward a mashal about a doctor and two patients. The element of the food is brought in, thus creating a natural transition to Leviticus 11.2 where is dealt with the animals Israel is permitted to eat and the animals Israel is forbidden to eat.

The last element of the petichah is the parasha verse. In the example, this is Leviticus 11.2. In the example there is no introduction to the parasha verse, probably because it serves as proof in the mashal.

The above described basic structure occurs with many divergences. The introduction is not always present and some petichot begin immediately with the remote verse²⁰¹. In some cases where the introduction is left out, the pericope verse is mentioned first, directly followed by the petichah verse²⁰². This might hint at a stage in which the petichot were captured in writing, but where the structure of the petichah had to be stressed, by placing the pericope verse at the beginning. A third variant is found in Genesis Rabbah where a new introduction for the remote verse is presented, it consists of the word כתיב, 'it has been written'. This general term is very often used for introducing Scripture, but it seems to have acquired the function of introducing a remote verse as well²⁰³. In Exodus Rabbah a similar expression הוּא דכתיב forms the introduction to the remote verse. Here too the formula is found in two different contexts: at the beginning of a petichah while introducing the remote verse²⁰⁴ and in the middle of an exegetical text, where it provides the introduction to a 'regular' Scriptural verse²⁰⁵. The appearance of this formula in the beginning of a passage does not necessarily imply that a petichah structure will be used, see for example Exodus Rabbah 9.7.

A parallel development seems to be the introduction זהו שאמר הכתוב, which is found in Leviticus Rabbah (Wilna)²⁰⁶, Numbers Rabbah (Wilna)²⁰⁷, Deuteronomy Rabbah (Wilna)²⁰⁸ and in the Tanchuma Buber where it occurs on a regular basis. This introduction is also found in Midrash Tehillim and Aggadat Bere'shit, which was touched upon in 4.3. Most often the remote verses are taken from the Writings or the Prophets. In a few petichot, the remote verse is from the Torah²⁰⁹. It appears however to be a more frequent phenomenon in later Midrashim. At times there is a comment between the pericope verse and the remote verse, see for example Genesis Rabbah 8.2. The differences in the beginning of a petichah has made Goldberg conclude that there

²⁰¹ For example Exodus Rabbah (Wilna) 51.1 and Leviticus Rabbah 2.1 and 8.1.

²⁰² See Leviticus Rabbah 6.1 and Genesis Rabbah 10.1 and 12.1.

²⁰³ 4.1, 5.1, 7.1, 21.1 and 27.1.

²⁰⁴ As in 2.2, 2.3, 4.1 and 5.10 etc.

²⁰⁵ See 9.9, 13.5 and 14.3

²⁰⁶ 4.2, 6.1, 7.1 e.a.

²⁰⁷ 15.8

²⁰⁸ 1.22, 2.4, 2.20 e.a.

²⁰⁹ As is the case in Leviticus Rabbah 25.3, Lamentations Rabbah petichah 21 and 27

were no firm rules and he even argues that the formula ‘N.N. patach’ does not belong to the form petichah because it is a meta-communicative notification²¹⁰. The fact that a passage begins with פתח or כתיב or any other formula is no guarantee that it contains a true petichah-form. For some reason there are passages that have the looks of petichah, but do not arrive at the destination verse. This already occurs in the early Midrashim, see for example Exodus Rabbah 50.1, Genesis Rabbah 8.2 and 41.1.

In a petichah, opened by a Rabbi, one expects this Rabbi to be the author of the statement(s) following the remote verse. That this is not necessarily the case, becomes clear in Lamentations Rabbah 2. The length of the main part of the petichah can vary from one comment to a series of comments. These comments can display different patterns. One of them is the composite form in which the remote verse is applied to several biblical figures, only to arrive in the end at the person who is mentioned in the pericope. A ‘dual structure’, which is not often used, is present in Pesiqta de Rav Kahana parasha 2 where the opinion of Rabbi Samuel bar Eimi and the Rabbis is built up along the same steps: identification of the enemy, the enemy’s statement that concurs with Scripture, the accused agrees that God agrees with the enemy, God forgives the accused. The structure that occurs most often is that of the דבר אחר, different explanations are given one after another and the last comment is the one that deals with the pericope verse. Occasionally petichot employ rhetorical devices such as a comparison or a mashal²¹¹.

Every petichah arrives, sooner or later, at the beginning of the parasha. In the majority of the early Midrashim this parasha verse is connected to the parasha from the Torah, but already in Lamentations Rabbah we find a cluster of petichot on Lamentations 1.1 i.e. not on a verse from the Torah. This tendency occurs more often in later Midrashim where the subject is not one of the books of the Torah, but a different Biblical book. In an ideal, well-working petichah, there should be a ‘fluent’ transition to the pericope verse, meaning that the pericope verse should be the logical next step in the exposition. In our example the path to Leviticus 11.2 is paved by the references to the Torah and by the mashal on permitted food and as a result the pericope verse comes naturally. Already in early Midrashim some transition formulae to the pericope verse are found. In Lamentations Rabbah eleven times the expression כיון שחטאו גלו כיון שגלו is used as a transition to Lamentations 1.1. Other transitions are: הוי²¹², לכך²¹³, שנאמר²¹⁴ and הדא הוא דכתיב²¹⁵. Goldberg writes on this phenomenon ‘Es gibt vor allem keinen einheitlichen Abschluss für den Perikopentext und keinen, der als solcher relevant für die Struktur wäre’ and ‘eine Petiha kann ohne jeden formalen Anschluss den Perikopentext am Ende einführen’²¹⁶.

²¹⁰ Goldberg, Arnold, ‘Versuch über die hermeneutische Präsupposition’ p. 36, 45.

²¹¹ Genesis Rabbah (Wilna) 10.2.

²¹² Exodus Rabbah 1.1, 2.2

²¹³ idem 4.2

²¹⁴ idem 4.3, Deuteronomy Rabbah (Wilna) 1.22

²¹⁵ Genesis Rabbah (Wilna) 10.2

²¹⁶ Goldberg, ‘Versuch über die hermeneutische Präsupposition’, p. 47

A special type of petichah is that of the circular proem. Unlike the regular petichah this type does not end with the parasha verse, but with the petichah verse. It is rarely present in the early Midrashim²¹⁷, but it is found on a more frequent basis in later Midrashim, where it still is a minority. The Tanchuma-Yelamdenu literature forms an exception, here two types of circular proems, 'the Holy Spirit'-type and 'I will come'-type are quite popular²¹⁸.

6.4.1.3 The Petichah in Midrash Tehillim

In chapter 1 Ch. Albeck's opinion on Midrash Tehillim was described. He thought that the petichot of Midrash Tehillim were unstructured²¹⁹ and that they show a decline from the high literary quality that was present in the early Midrashim. Two of his main arguments are that its petichot are anonymous and that the terminology is not used in a consistent way. With regard to the expression *זהו שאמר הכתוב*, 'this is to be read in the light of', he points out that it is not used consistently because at times it functions as an introductory formula for the petichah, albeit that many petichot deviate in the sense that they do not arrive at the destination verse, and at times the expression serves as an introduction to Scripture, thus being similar in function to *שנאמר* etc. Thus Albeck confronts us with two intriguing questions: What are the functions of the expression *זהו שאמר הכתוב* in Midrash Tehillim? And: Is there really no structure at all in the petichot?

The petichot in Midrash Tehillim do not contain the *פתח*-opening, but have the anonymous introduction *זהו שאמר הכתוב*. Its function is similar to that of *הדא הוא דכתיב* in Exodus Rabbah. Even though this introductory formula does occur in early Midrashim, it is mainly a later feature, perhaps it is a later development of the aforementioned *הדא הוא דכתיב* or of the simpler form *כתיב*. Before the petichah verse and its introduction are mentioned, the pericope verse is given. This may have something to do with the fact that the majority of petichot are on pericopes from the Torah and therefore a petichah on the Psalms may have been unusual. There may also have been a practical reason, namely the fact that mentioning the pericope verse at the beginning facilitates the recognition of the petichah form and it will help the audience with understanding how the petichah verse and the pericope verse are brought together. The Pesiqta de Rav Kahana mentions the pericope verse as a kind of title before the homilies and petichot, other examples can be found in Leviticus Rabbah 8.1 and Exodus Rabbah 51.1.

The expression *זהו שאמר הכתוב* (זש"ה) occurs in three different contexts in Midrash Tehillim; halfway or near the end of a passage, at the beginning of a passage without introducing a petichah and finally it is found at the beginning of a passage serving as

²¹⁷ Genesis Rabbah 27.1 and Exodus Rabbah 14.1

²¹⁸ Bregman, M., 'Circular Proems and Proems beginning with the formula *zo hi' shene'emra beruach haq-qodesh* (Hebr)' in: *Studies in Aggadah, Targum and Jewish Liturgy, in memory of Joseph Heinemann*, Fleischer, E. and Petuchowski, J.J. (eds), Jerusalem 1981, pages 34-51.

²¹⁹ Zunz, L. and Albeck, Ch., *הדרשות בישראל Ha-Derashot be-Israel*, Jerusalem 1954 pp 132, 411ff.

an introduction to a petichah. In a few cases, ten in total, the expression is found halfway or near the end of the derasha. Except for 79.3, none of these passages have a petichah-form. Two types of texts seem to qualify for this phenomenon: 1) those where the expression does introduce a quote followed by a comment, which forms a continuation of the previous explanation²²⁰ and 2) those where the expression introduces a quote that is followed by an exposition that deviates from the previous explanation²²¹. An example of the first category is 21.1 where זהו שאמר הכתוב is found two times, the first time is at the beginning of the midrash where it introduces a petichah²²² and the second time is near the end of this petichah. The Micha verse introduced there only illustrates what has been argued in the previous lines: a king reigns in the name of God. Here it could have been replaced by one of the more general introductions to Scripture like דכתיב or שנאמר. Passage 16.1 is a good example of the second category: first there is a commentary on Psalm 16.1 a and b in two steps, which is followed by a quote that consists of a combination of Psalm 16 verses 1c and 2. Right after this comes זהו שאמר הכתוב which is used as an introduction to Psalm 24.1. This passage, except for the parts that Buber marked as ו and ח, consists of elements that are taken from Talmud Jerushalmi Berachot chapter 6. It is not a literal quote, which was already indicated by the use of אמרו חכמים instead of שנו חכמים²²³. Some parts have been reworked, such as for example כל הנהנה into כל הנהנה מן העולם, thus placing it in this world, while meantime involving everyone who does so. The quote of Psalm 24.1 has made it possible to understand verse 2, which was previously read as 'I have no good but in You', as 'It will not be held against you'. The comment on verse 1a/b was mainly interested in the exegetical phenomenon of notarikon and in identifying the subject of the verse, while the part that is introduced by ושי"ה has room for the halachic dimension of Psalm 16.2 and it also mentions different ways of reading this verse. The passages that belong to this second category have material in common with other passages in either Midrash Tehillim or in other sources. Midrash Tehillim 16.1 has incorporated material from elsewhere, this is for example also true for 79.3. There the question 'how can Asaph compose a psalm?' is very similar to the question regarding David in 3.3, the quote from Proverbs 21.15 reminds one of the similar context in 3.1 and the mashal about a king who is angry with his son brings 3.3 into mind.

The largest group exists of cases where ושי"ה appears in the beginning, but where it does not introduce a petichah. In these passages there is also, like in the petichot, no comment between the Psalm verse and the biblical quote. The function of the quote varies: in half of the cases the verse plays an important role in the comment and is repeated, in the other cases the verse supports a certain explanation, but the verse is no consistent factor throughout the passage. Midrash Tehillim 34.1 belongs to this first category. The comment is on Psalm 34.1 which tells that David changed his demeanor before Abimelech. This posed the commentator before a problem: David did not feign madness before Abimelech, but before Achish the king of Gat. Right after Psalm 34.1

²²⁰ 18.33, 21.2, 40.4 and 53.2

²²¹ 16.1, 18.5, 22.15, 23.6, 79.3 and 87.1

²²² This petichah belongs to the third category of petichot that will be discussed later on.

²²³ See elsewhere in this chapter.

follows Ecclesiastes 3.11 'He has made everything beautiful in its time' that was introduced by וְשִׁיָּהּ. This verse is followed by four different explanations that all demonstrate that God created both people and objects in their due season. The fifth comment states that God has not only made everything beautiful, but that He has also made it in wisdom, as is proven by Psalm 104.24. David challenges this claim because he doubts the profit of folly. God tells him that he will need madness and that he will even grieve and pray for it. Thus the link to David and madness is established. David's flight from Saul is reread leaving out David's encounter with the priest Achimelech who gave him hallowed bread, and more important, Goliath's sword. In I Samuel 21 this sword is not mentioned in connection with Achish, nor did Achish respond there to the allegations his servants made concerning David. In Midrash Tehillim David is pictured at Achish's court, having Goliath's sword with him. The sword is probably the reason why Achish's servants identify David as the one who killed Goliath and this is also why they want to kill David. Achish defends David by saying that David killed during a war, but he retracts his support when he realizes that this could lead to his own downfall. At this point David fears for his life and prays God for madness, which is demonstrated by Psalm 34.1. The comment then addresses the problem that Abimelech is mentioned, while David feigned folly before Achish. This is solved by understanding it as a way to say that Achish was a righteous man like Abimelech. Hereafter the comment returns to the moment David became scared and pretended to be a fool. The result of his act is that Achish sends him away because he is having enough problems with his mad wife and daughter already. Thus is demonstrated that God has made everything well, even the things that may not seem convenient at first. Ecclesiastes 3.11 plays a role throughout the comment and it justifies David's deceit. Midrash Tehillim 74.1 is an example of a passage where the quote introduced by וְשִׁיָּהּ plays only a minor role. The Psalm reads 'Why oh Lord have You cast (us) off forever? (Why) does Your anger smoke against the flock of Your pasture? Jeremiah 15.15, introduced by וְשִׁיָּהּ, is brought forward to demonstrate that the Lord is longsuffering. Both texts contain the word אָפַךְ, which in Jeremiah appears as לֹאֲרָךְ אָפַךְ, which is exactly what was required to make the connection to 'longsuffering' in Psalm 86.15. The Jeremiah-verse does not reappear in this passage, nor does the idea of God's longsuffering resurface in this comment. The fact that וְשִׁיָּהּ appears in passages lacking the petichah form, may seem to be a sign of deterioration, however passages which begin with a petichah introduction but do not reach the pericope verse, are also found in earlier Midrashim.

In fiftyseven cases the expression וְשִׁיָּהּ serves as introduction to a petichah, this implies that all the petichot have an anonymous beginning. Some petichot do contain names of Rabbis in the body of the petichah²²⁴. There are two types of petichot in Midrash Tehillim, the 'regular petichah' where the pericope verse is a Psalm-verse and the 'circular proem' where the petichah verse also functions as destination

²²⁴ 3.1, 4.3, 5.2, 10.8, 15.1, 17.1, 18.1, 19.1, 21.1, 23.2, 24.4, 27.1, 27.2, 30.4, 30.5, 31.3, 52.1, 52.2, 52.3, 54.1, 59.1, 91.1, 100.2, 102.1, 103.1, 104.3, 107.1, 108.1, 110.1 and 114.1.

verse²²⁵. The length of the petichot varies, but the average peticha is not very long and can be compared to the length of the petichot in Genesis Rabbah.

The majority of the petichah verses are taken from the Writings and the Prophets. A great number of them come from the Psalms. Only in 6 cases the petichah verse is taken from the Torah. Some petichah verses are used more than once, such as Proverbs 15.8 in 17.1, 90.1 and 102.1, Isaiah 10.17 in 22.2 and 27.1 and Proverbs 18.21 in 51.1 and 52.2. As stated previously Proverbs 15.8 is a special case because it also functions as remote verse in Aggadat Bere'shit²²⁶. At times there is a verbal link between the pericope verse and the petichah verse. Two very clear examples are 18.1 and 18.2 where both verses contain the word יום, more subtle is the petichah in 15.1 where a play exists between מי יגור and ממגור, and the one in 8.1 where a pun exists between גת and הגתית.

Midrash Tehillim employs several strategies in its petichot and no standard method can be detected. Because of this diversity, almost every petichah has a surprising effect. As indicated above a pun can establish a link between the pericope verse and petichah verse. Often the exposition will evolve around this link. Another way to expound the pericope verse is to take a certain word from the petichah verse and to use this as the starting point of the explanation. In 10.8 the anonymous philosopher says that the Lord has performed the ritual of חליצה, a conclusion which he derives from the petichah verse. The body of the petichah itself is formed by a discussion between Rabban Gamliel and the philosopher. In 21.1 the words ישמח מלך of the destination verse are interpreted by means of the petichah verse, the messianic Isaiah 11.1, and then transformed into the 'king Messiah', מלך המשיח. The king Messiah and his relationship with God is the subject of the remainder of the passage. At times a rhetorical device is brought into the petichah, this is also true for Midrash Tehillim. In 114.1 we find a mashal about a donkey and its rider who want to get rid of each other, this mashal is quite straightforward and it forms the main part of the petichah. The mashal at the end of 70.1, which seems to be an addition because the pericope verse, along with a transition formula, has already been mentioned, draws attention to David's position. It takes advantage of the fact that the pericope verse can be read in a different way: God must remember David, while the first part of the passage pointed out that David and Israel had to remember God. In 10.1 the mashal is the moment where the intention of Israel's attackers becomes clear, it plays a crucial role in the understanding of the petichah verse from Daniel and the call to God. The form that is most frequently used, in the petichot as well as in the other passages, is that of דבר אחר. It can appear at the beginning of a petichah, when it is not the first passage to that Psalm and it is also often present within the petichah where it forms the introduction to another opinion.

²²⁵ Regular petichot are found in 3.1, 8.1, 10.1, 10.8, 15.1, 15.2, 18.1, 18.2, 19.1, 21.1, 23.2, 24.1, 24.4, 27.1, 28.1, 30.1, 30.4, 31.1, 31.2, 31.3, 35.1, 36.1, 41.4, 45.1, 45.3, 51.1, 51.2, 52.2, 52.3, 54.1, 59.1, 63.1, 68.1, 69.1, 70.1, 81.1, 85.1, 90.1, 90.6, 81.1, 100.2, 102.1, 103.1, 104.3, 107.1, 108.1, 111.1 and 114.1. It is used as an introduction to a circular peticha in: 4.3, 5.2, 17.1, 22.2, 27.2, 30.5, 37.1, 110.1 and 118.1.

²²⁶ See 4.3.

The petichot in Midrash Tehillim have not been composed according to one strategy, but they display a diversity in both form and topic. Thus meshalim (10.1, 14.1 and 70.1), monologues and dialogues (5.2, 31.1, 45.3 and 90.1), and a ma'aseh (52.2) are used in the petichot. With regard to content they contain polemics (10.1, 10.8 and 24.4), comparisons between biblical figures (27.2 and 81.1), theological discussions and lessons (30.4, 104.3 and 108.1) and folktales (91.1 and 110.1). Many petichot do not have a parallel in earlier literature and even when there are parallels these petichot often differ with regard to context and meaning. Midrash Tehillim 8.1 is such an example of a petichah that has a parallel elsewhere. The middle part of this petichah, on the four things that should not be harvested before their due season, has a parallel in Song of Songs Rabbah 8.12. In Midrash Tehillim these four metaphors are not totally explained, while Song of Songs Rabbah points out the danger of an early harvest for every individual case. Not only the level of detail differs in these two parallels, but also the context. In Midrash Tehillim it is situated in the context of the four kingdoms that will be judged. It fits in with the promises of the harvest, that is represented by the winepress, which follows after this part.

Nearly all the petichot in Midrash Tehillim have a small introduction to the pericope verse. The majority of them is standard, like *לכך נאמר* or *לכך נאמר* or just *לכך*. In a few cases there is a small scene in which David ponders over the interpretation or over facts given in the petichah-body and he decides to perform the action as well or the transition explains his motives. The first occasion is in 3.1 where David is joyful because judgment is executed upon him, he is thus regarded as one of the righteous who were mentioned in the last argument of this petichah. At the end of 15.1 David concludes on the basis of the remote verse that no one can live in God's tent. In 23.2 David decides to call God shepherd, even though shepherds are despised, because Jacob called the Lord a shepherd. David attributes the creation of the world to God alone in 24.4, which is in agreement with statements by several rabbis. In 27.1 distinction is made between the righteous for whom a light is set apart and the nations who will encounter darkness. In the petichah-body the light is connected to the End, this is why David mentions both light and salvation in the pericope verse. Passage 31.1 shows that everyone who trusts in the Lord will be saved, this is David's motivation to put his trust in the Lord. In 31.3 is taught that those who have trusted in other gods will be ashamed. David fears this fierce shame and starts praying to God. In this prayer he put his trust in the Lord and asks Him to let him never be ashamed. In 36.1 is stated that even though the Lord wages Israel's wars, the victory is attributed to Israel. David however wants to ascribe victory to the Lord, which he does in the pericope verse. The petichah in 51.1 describes how the prophet Nathan tells David that the Lord has forgiven him because David has confessed. As a response David composed this psalm, the first verse should be understood as an expression that God let Himself be won over by David's confession. Another instance is found in 100.2 where is shown that repentance is required by the Lord. Several instances are given and Moses chooses to make a Psalm of avowal, which is the new understanding of the original Psalm title *מזמור לתודה*. The last case is in 108.1 where David follows the example of Moses who prepared his heart before praying to God.

An ideal typical petichah should run smoothly, i.e. every step within the petichah should serve a purpose and the destination verse should come as the natural result of

the exposition. Now in Midrash Tehillim the presence of the small transition formulae may suggest a deficiency. That this is not necessarily the case, is shown by Lamentations Rabbah, but in Midrash Tehillim there are indeed some petichot that are so complex that it appears that essential stages have been left out. In 15.1 we find two types of explanations: first the petichah verse is said to speak of the wicked kingdom, then several wordplays are made which all point to Rome. Suddenly the style changes and the scene moves to Isaiah who is questioned about his knowledge. Isaiah answers with the words of Isaiah 31.9 that the Lord has spoken thus, and then the words of this pericope verse are repeated by David who then utters his Psalm. What is missing in this petichah is a smoother transition from the first to the second part and secondly the part on Isaiah 31.9 is very short; one would have expected a few more lines before the pericope verse would be brought in. In 70.1 we find another leap in thoughts. Psalm 70.1 is complicated and its explanation depends on what aspect is emphasized. Do we have to read *להזכיר אלהים* 'to remember God' and is the part before that just the Psalm's beginning, like 'a psalm by David'? Or was the Psalm created to cause God to remember David, *לדוד להזכיר*? Or should one read 'to remind God to save me' *להזכיר אלהים להצילני*? The first possibility, remembering God, is looked at from different angles and the exposition reaches an end when David decides to remember the Lord in order to be saved. The second reading, that God should remember, comes as a surprise. There is no verse quoted that could facilitate this transition to this second explanation. This part starts with a mashal and the explanation becomes more transparent in the nimshal, where the reader realizes that the Psalm verse is read in a different way. The fact that David is forgotten can only be deduced from Psalm 70.1 and there is no proof from Psalm 69 showing that the rebuilding and ingathering of the flock had taken place. The third example that I will give is found in 3.1 where it is claimed that 'executing judgment is a joy to a righteous'. This verse, Proverbs 21.15, is applied twice to the Lord, but the second time this is done it does not reveal why it is a pleasure for God. Between the lines, one may read that the destruction of the Temple caused the people to fear God, or that not showing any partiality 'enables' the Lord to punish others even harsher. The third, and last, application fails to show what sins David committed that required cleansing, here too exists a gap.

The diversity in the structure of the petichot in Rabbinic literature suggests that there was no strict set of rules that had to be applied when making a petichah. It seems that many variations were allowed as long as the basic rule, namely that the petichah verse should lead to the pericope verse, was observed. Due to the fact that the content of the petichah is in part determined by the combination of two verses, little room is left for patterns and stereotypes. This means that there was a relatively great freedom with respect to both form and content. It could also imply that the deficiency of Midrash Tehillim's petichot is not as great as Albeck suggested. Part of what Albeck labeled as deficiency, may have been 'darshans' freedom'. A second element that may have created confusion is the fact that quite a number of passages uses the expression *וְשִׁיר* for the introduction of a verse that is important for the entire parasha, without being a petichah verse. That this is not necessarily a sign of deficiency and lateness is demonstrated by the fact that this phenomenon is also present in earlier Midrashim. In my opinion deficiency does not play a major role in the petichot of Midrash Tehillim. However, there is another phenomenon that threatens the effectiveness of the petichot. To a certain extent the complexity of a number of the petichot of Midrash

Tehillim is distorting. Too many and too complicated manoeuvres in the body of the petichah are distracting and harm the message of the petichah. This brings us back to the origin of the petichot. Earlier on I agreed with J. Heinemann that the origin of the petichah must lie in a liturgical setting. Yet the petichot we find in Midrash Tehillim are probably not reports of a 'live delivery of a petichah' because of the preference for the introduction זשייה. While I do not think the petichot of Midrash Tehillim are academic products in the way Jaffee describes this, I do believe that there the petichot that have an overkill of information or of tricks have experienced some reworking and cannot have been created nor used as such in a 'pure' liturgical setting. This may be a sign of lateness, as Albeck would argue, but given the assumed absence of strict rules, it may also be the product of artistic freedom.

6.4.2 The Mashal

6.4.2.1 The form of the Mashal

The mashal is an exegetical tool that is already found in tannaitic halachic works such as the Mechilta de Rabbi Ishmael, Sifré on Numbers and Sifré on Deuteronomy. However, the mashal is mainly found in aggadic material where it is fully integrated in the derashot. This integration is the reason why the mashal requires the presence of a lemma, that is the scriptural verse that should be elucidated. This lemma is usually found at the beginning of the derasha, or it is implied when the derasha begins with דבר אחר. In Midrash Tehillim the lemma is indeed often found at the beginning of the passage and it is usually a Psalm verse, but it can also be another verse that was introduced in a previous derasha, as is the case in 22.12. The lemma can be followed by one or more dictum(s), which comment on the lemma or which discuss a certain topic or tell a tale, but this is not a requirement. The lemma and the mashal are linked and, mostly in retrospect, the reader will gain a new insight into the lemma. It is often not clear from the beginning of the mashal on which part of the lemma the mashal concentrates: this adds to the suspense and reinforces the strength of the mashal. Midrash Tehillim 81.2 contains a mashal that is required to understand the dictum that follows the lemma, Psalm 81.2. In this verse a synonymous parallelism is found הרנינו 'Sing aloud to God our strength' and הריעו לאלהי יעקב 'shout to the God of Jacob'. Midrash Tehillim 81.1 seeks to find out why Jacob is singled out in 'the God of Jacob'. Numbers 23.21, words by Balaam, plays a role in the explanation and the conclusion of this passage is that Jacob, as well as his offspring, was holy. In the first part of 81.2 a teaching by the Rabbis²²⁷ 'the measure wherewith a man measures, therewith others measure him' is given as a reason why Balaam singled Jacob out. However, the somewhat technical exposition does not explain how the teaching should be applied to Jacob, nor why. It is in the mashal that the connection to the lemma is made and from it we learn that 'the God of Jacob' is God's reward for Jacob's sound advice²²⁸ in Genesis 28.17. At the end of the passage it has also become clear how the

²²⁷ Mishnah Sotah 1.7.

²²⁸ Jacob calls the place (מקום) where he had his dream about the ladder בית אלהים 'House of God'.

teaching of the Rabbis needs to be understood: Jacob's correct naming of the place that would later become the Temple has been followed by a correct naming in Psalm 81.2 'the God of Jacob'.

There are several ways to introduce a mashal. The mashal may be told by a certain Rabbi (רבי ... אמר), by an anonymous collective of Rabbis (רבנן אמרו) or anonymously (משלו משל). In Midrash Tehillim about half of the meshalim have been handed down with the name of the tradent and the other half are anonymous. The meshalim that can be considered as unique, i.e. without any parallels in other rabbinic texts, are at times passed down anonymously and at times together with the name of a Rabbi. This suggests that the presence of the name of the tradent has no influence on the uniqueness of the meshalim. The formal introduction to a mashal, which may follow the examples given above, is למה הדבר דומה? משל ל 'What does the case resemble? It may be compared to' or משל ל 'it may be compared to...'. The 'case', הדבר, that is mentioned is at that moment still unknown and will keep the reader in suspense. This 'case' is connected to the lemma and it is something that is presented as a dilemma, or a (seeming) contradiction, or an indication that a certain explanation for someone's behaviour is missing etc.

After the introduction, the body of the mashal follows. This can be divided into two main parts, the first being the mashal, or *comperatum* in Goldberg's terminology²²⁹, and the second one is called nimshal, or *comperandum*. The *comperatum* contains a fictional story, usually about human beings, in which a more or less similar situation as the 'case' is told. The characters find themselves in a certain situation, but at a sudden moment a turn in events takes place. This turning point²³⁰ can be the solution to the dilemma that is thought up by one of the characters, it can be an unexpected intervention by a third party, a reconciliation, the retrieval of a lost item etc. The story of the *comperatum* only contains the bare essentials that are necessary to create the atmosphere and the general outline of a story. Many details are lacking, such as the events that have lead to the current situation, the emotions of the characters, how the turning point influenced the events after the moment the problem has been solved etc.

Certain characters in the meshalim, such as a father and his son, or a king and his queen, appear so often that they have become stereotypes. The father and the king often stand for God, while Israel is often portrayed as the son or as the wife or as a vineyard. Though Midrash Tehillim uses these familiar metaphors in the meshalim that are not associated with the redemption, and at times they are also found in the meshalim on redemption, it seems that there has been an attempt to bring some originality into the meshalim on redemption. This has been done by creating new characters and new situations to explain God's and Israel's relationship.

The relation between the *comperatum* and *comperandum* is one of analogy, the structure of the nimshal has been laid down in the mashal and will be used in the

²²⁹ Goldberg, 'Das Schriftauslegende Gleichnis im Midrash', in *FJB*, 9, 1981 p. 19.

²³⁰ Goldberg calls the part that precedes the turning point *protasis* and the part that begins with the shift *apodosis*. Idem, p. 19.

nimshal. The story of the mashal has been translated to the biblical pericope, which does not have to imply that it completely corresponds to the biblical text. In reality the message the darshan wanted to convey, a certain thought or exegetical point, preceded the nimshal and the mashal. The mashal has been modelled on the concept of the nimshal, while the structure of a mashal suggests the opposite order. In the nimshal the lemma usually returns, but also other biblical quotes which demonstrate or illustrate some aspects of the case can be found. One of the functions of the comperatum is to create a setting and atmosphere in which the biblical scene can be developed. Thus one will also find a turn in the nimshalim that will be anticipated by the reader. Like the mashal, the nimshal does not dwell on every possible detail, this may be done in order to keep the audience involved in the tale and may thus be easier reminded by the audience. Midrash Tehillim often has a discrepancy between the mashal and its nimshal, this is probably a deliberate feature to attract attention to the nimshal. One way this is achieved is by not taking up an element of the mashal in the nimshal. Another way is to insert an aspect in the nimshal that was not covered by the mashal. Also altering an element, such as replacing a dialogue by a monologue, is used as a way to create some difference between the mashal and its nimshal. In the example below the elements of the mashal and the superstructure of the passage wherein it appears have been translated and the smaller elements that make up the structure have been labelled.

6.4.2.2 An example: Midrash Tehillim 45.1 The king and the crown of lilies

למנצח [על שושנים] לבני קרח [משכיל] שיר ידידות. זהו שאמר הכתוב דודי ירד לגנו [וגו'] וללקוט שושנים (שיר השירים ו ב), ולא היו ניכרים, וכל מי שהיה רואה אותם אומר קוצים הם, למה שהיו עם קוצים, ומה דרכן של קוצים, [לאש, שנאמר קוצים] כסוחים באש יוצתו (ישעיה לג יב), [וכתיב כי תצא אש ומצאה קוצים (שמות כב ה)], וכתיב ואש יצאה מאת ה' ותאכל את החמשים ומאתים איש (במדבר יו לה), ובני קרח שהיו שושנים נלקטו מבין הקוצים, שלא יאכלו עם הקוצים, כך קפץ הקב"ה והצילם, משל למלך שנכנס למדינה, ובאו בני המדינה לעטרו עטרה של זהב, מקובעת באבנים טובות ומרגליות, יצאו ואמרו להם אין המלך מבקש מכם אלא עטרה של שושנים, מיד שמחו בני המדינה, כך היו קרח ועדתו²³¹, אמרו הקב"ה מבקש מכם מחתות של זהב, אמר להן הקב"ה מה לי של זהב, לי הכסף ולי הזהב (חגי ב ח), ואפילו הקטורת, קטורת תועבה היא לי (ישעיה א יג), אלא מה אני מבקש, שושנים, אמרו בני קרח אנו שושנים, אמר להם הקב"ה נצחתם, שנאמר למנצח על שושנים לבני קרח.

{lemma}

For the choirmaster, upon Shoshannim, the sons of Korach. A mashkil. A song of loves.

(Psalm 45.1)

{introduction to petichah and the remote verse}

²³¹ Buber's text reads 'Korach's sons', but that does not make sense because the Bible speaks of Korach and his assembly.

It is to be read in the light of: my beloved has descended to his garden [etc.] to pick lilies (Songs 6.2).

{dictum}

And they were not recognized. Everyone who sees them says 'They are thorns.' Why? Because they were among the thorns. And which way do thorns go? [to the fire, as has been said: *Thorns*] *are cut down and will be burned with fire* (Isaiah 33.12). [and it has been written: *for fire will go forth and find thorns* (Exodus 22.5)] and it has been written: *fire went forth from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men* (Numbers 16.35). The sons of Korach who were lilies picked from among the thorns so that they would not be consumed together with the thorns. Thus leapt the Holy One blessed be He and saved them.

{short introduction to the mashal}

It may be compared to a king

{mashal: protasis}

who entered a city and the people of the city came to crown him with a golden crown that was beset with precious stones and gems.

{mashal apodosis}

They went forth and said to them: 'The king only wants a crown of lilies from you.' Immediately the people of the city rejoiced.

{nimshal is introduced by: כִּדּוּךְ}

{nimshal protasis}

Likewise it was with Korach and his assembly. They said: 'The Holy One blessed be He wants golden censers from you.'

{nimshal apodosis}

The Holy One blessed be He said to them: 'What good is something of gold to Me? *Mine is the silver, Mine is the gold* (Haggai 2.8). Even the incense. *Incense is an abomination to Me* (Isaiah 1.13). But what do I want? Lilies.'

Korach's sons said: 'We are lilies.' The Holy One blessed be He said: 'You will be victorious.' As has been said: *To Him who gives victory to the sons of Korach because they are lilies.*

The superstructure of this passage is that of a circular proem. The petichah is introduced by the expression **זֶהוּ שְׂאֵמֶר הַכְּתוּב**, a common formula in Midrash Tehillim. The remote verse draws attention to the **שׁוֹשְׁנִים** (lilies) and the fact that there is some kind of loving relationship, indicated by the similar words **יְדִידוּת** and **דּוּדִי** which are found in these two verses. The darshan uses the metaphors of lilies and thorns to

illustrate the contrast between Korach and the other rebelling leaders on the one hand and Korach's righteous sons on the other hand. For the darshan it was a small step to go from the Korachites, choristers in the Temple, to Korach's sons who lived hundreds of years earlier. While the Psalm verse mentions Korach's sons, it is only after quoting Numbers 16.35 that one realizes whom the metaphors represent. The mashal comes right after the moment the audience has identified the people behind the metaphors and places them in a new context. The mashal brings in the character of a king, the well-known type for God. The inhabitants of the city he visits want to pay him honour with a very expensive crown. Presumably people of the royal entourage point out that the king only wants a crown of lilies. This turning point in the mashal causes great relief with the city's inhabitants. As is customary in a mashal, many details are missing such as the occasion for which the king came and for which the population offered him a crown. It is also not known why the king preferred a crown of lilies over a golden crown, nor do we know why the people rejoiced after hearing that. Was it only because of financial reasons or were they also glad because the king was not after money and was satisfied with the gesture of the people offering him a crown?

Also in this case the nimshal is not an exact copy of its mashal. It brings in new elements and at some points it diverts from the mashal. Let us first have a look at the differences in setting; there is no mention of God visiting Israel and unlike the human king God does not use messengers to make His wishes known. Korach and his company represent a group that is not present in the mashal; the ones that made the suggestion to make the valuable crown. While the king of the mashal may have been modest and therefore rejected the precious crown, God on the other hand stresses the fact that He is the owner of everything and even considers incense an abomination. Here part of the biblical story of Numbers 16 is explained in a different way. In the biblical context Korach and the other leaders argue with Moses and Aaron about the fact that they, despite the fact that they are consecrated, play a role of lesser importance than Moses and Aaron. The censers are only a tool that is used to establish whose incense the Lord accepts and therewith whom God accepts as religious authorities. The darshan has interpreted the scene differently and has made the censers the object of the rejection of Korach and his company. They do not give the Lord what He wants, what is more, they offer Him something He loathes. The lilies the Lord wants are the sons of Korach who have not followed their father and whose conduct was impeccable. In Midrash Tehillim 46.3 further details of how God saved them when the earth opened its mouth, which is not mentioned in 45.1 in order to put emphasis on the fire that came after the men had been swallowed, are given. The darshan finds in their rescue an opening to explain another word of the Psalm, namely למנצח that is often translated as 'choirmaster', but in Midrash Tehillim it is sometimes²³² associated with 'being victorious', or in this case it is understood as a pi'el participle. The fact that they are good among bad people has saved their lives.

In this particular case it is evident that the mashal in its entirety has been composed with the exegetical message in mind. The darshan faces several difficulties, or to put it

²³² See for example 8.1 and 8.8.

differently opportunities, in the Psalm verse. In the end he has succeeded at bringing three loosely connected elements together and explaining them as an unity.

6.4.2.3 The function of the Mashal

As has become clear in the comments on 45.1, the mashal is more than just a literary form. It also has a hermeneutic function, which becomes especially evident in derashot that only consist of lemma and mashal²³³. Goldberg's approach concentrates solely on form analysis and as a result the strength and purpose of the mashal have not received as much attention as desirable and this certainly is a drawback in his approach. The mashal of 45.1 has not only solved the 'case', initially the question what the שושנים in Psalm 45.1 referred to, but it has also conveyed a message about Korach and his sons. God condemns Korach and his company and at the same time He praises and rewards Korach's sons.

The meshalim on redemption in Midrash Tehillim digress from the 'standard' mashal in the sense that the well-known and popular king-mashal is not the dominant type of mashal, although it is present, sometimes with slight alterations such as replacing the main character by a prince (14.7) or princess (22.12). A range of characters are used in the meshalim and God is among others pictured as a strong person, a keeper of a station house and a suffering mother. The latter occurs in a setting in which God weeps about the Temple, which is an idea that is also expressed elsewhere²³⁴. Yet to portray God as a suffering and caring mother is certainly a new and somewhat unexpected, element. Disparities between the mashal and its nimshal are to be regarded as intentional and their effects should be taken into account.

6.5 Themes

Midrash Tehillim touches upon many subjects. It would go too far to sum them all up, therefore a selection of them will be presented below. The theme of redemption will be introduced at the end.

6.5.1 David

As one might expect in a Midrash that deals with a book with a 'traditional' author, it has a number of passages dedicated to the author. David did not bear an irreproachable character and the Midrash displays two views: it praises and defends David, but it also condemns some of his actions. Already in the comments on the first Psalm the darshan establishes a positive link to David. The Psalm itself is not dedicated to an author and therefore a connection to David is welcome. Psalm 1.1 has the appearance of a proverb and points to no one in particular. The task for the darshan is to make clear

²³³ See for example 105.11.

²³⁴ Lamentations Rabbah petichah 24, Mechilta Beshallah 10 and Pesiqta de Rav Kahana 13.11. Fishbane writes on the development of part of this tradition in *The Exegetical Imagination*, p.p. 22-40.

which righteous is referred to when the Psalm says 'blessed the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked'. Even before this verse is applied to a prophet or a patriarch in no less than three units the righteous is identified as David. The comparison of David to Moses, and also of the five books of Psalms to the five books of Moses (1.2) give the Psalms and its author the required authority.

The Midrash also shows a more negative side of David. Psalm 7 speaks of 'impulsive speech' (שגיון) that David uttered against Cush the Benjamite. It is only here that the Bible mentions this Cush and the darshan of Midrash Tehillim connects it to the famous Benjamite Saul whom David cursed on several occasions. Although Saul has lost God's support and has been rejected by God, he has not become a complete outlaw and still receives some protection. In several comments on Psalm 7 it becomes clear that God does not want David to curse Saul (7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.18), who was after all God's anointed. David admits his mistake when he calls it impulsive speech. David's worse sin was of course that he had an affair with Bath Sheba and that he had a hand in her husband's death so that he could come close to her. This incident is mentioned a number of times, not always because it was required by the biblical verses. For example in 4.2 where, perhaps by a faint wordplay on מצטער/בצר, where it is one of three things David worried about. The second worry concerns the idea the people have²³⁵ concerning David's unfitness for ruling Israel. Their complaint 'that he took the ewe-lamb, killed its shepherd and made Israel fall by the sword'²³⁶ is set aside by Nathan the prophet who declares that David's sin has been forgiven. This statement also solves the third problem concerning the question if Solomon is the right heir to David's throne.

In other passages a more positive view on David is found, mainly based on what the Bible tells about David. Within Midrash Tehillim David often intercedes for Israel, for example when he saw that the four kingdoms would come against Israel he composed a Psalm urging God to rise²³⁷. Midrash Tehillim ascribes prophetic qualities to David and also demonstrates how much David loved Israel. Despite the fact that David lived many centuries before those who lived after the destruction of the Second Temple people should still be able to experience what he has done for them. David has not only the role of intercessor, but also that of interpreter. On a number of occasions for example in 22.14, 31.2 and 104.3 David's motivation to write a certain verse or Psalm is introduced by the formula כיון שדוד ראה כך...אמר. David interprets a certain situation and acts on this. Many a Psalm may, according to the darshan, have been composed after David gained insight into a particular subject or situation.

²³⁵ Or Doeg and Achitophel in 3.5.

²³⁶ Note the similar wording in 3.5 and 6.9. It is in part inspired by the words of Nathan in 2 Samuel 12, but the element of the shepherd, a hint at David's former profession and his role as king, is new.

²³⁷ See 17.9. This text will be discussed in detail later on.

6.5.2 The Temple

In the history of the Temple our Midrash discerns four periods: the building by Solomon, the destruction by the Babylonians²³⁸, the Second Temple period and its destruction by the Romans and its aftermath. Some passages that speak of the first Temple add miraculous elements to its building and dedication. In the description of the building of the Temple²³⁹ is revealed that no iron tools were used. The darshan of 78.12 inferred from this that the use of these tools was not allowed and that this posed Solomon for quite a problem, that could only be solved by using the Shamir, a small device that looks like a kernel of barley. In this passage there is the amusing story about how Solomon made Benaiah catch Ashmedai the king of the demons who told them where the Shamir could be found. The stones for the Temple were cut by means of the Shamir and another passage, 24.10, relates how the Temple built itself and how all the stones flew to the right places. The darshan deliberately neglects the fact that the stones were cut in Tyre before they were transported to Israel and creates an opportunity to add to the marvel of the First Temple. Another miraculous event took place when Solomon wanted to bring the ark into the Holy of Holies. The Temple would not let it pass until Solomon said that David's good deeds needed to be remembered, here too is suggested that David was forgiven.

The second phase concerns the destruction of the First Temple. In the Bible we find the thought that this catastrophe took place with God's approval. God gave several countries to Nebuchadnezzar, whom He calls 'My servant'²⁴⁰. Midrash Tehillim adopts this view that God coordinated the downfall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in the sixth century BCE. Not all biblical passages so strongly point out that Nebuchadnezzar is God's answer to the idolatry of Judah and its kings, but they do mention that God sent Nebuchadnezzar²⁴¹ or that the people of Judah should serve him²⁴². The clearest remarks that state that God ordered the Babylonians to cooperate with Him are found in 79.1 and 79.2. God appointed Nebuchadnezzar as His servant and made him go up to destroy Jerusalem and exile Israel. In 79.2 the Midrash shows how Nebuchadnezzar was summoned by a 'bat qol' to carry out God's orders. He is called a bad servant because he ignored the 'bat qol' for eighteen years. After this period he uses the divination of arrows to see if he should obey. He shoots arrows into the directions of great cities and they all break, except for the one he shot into the direction of Jerusalem. He regards this as a sign that he should destroy Jerusalem and kill God's children and decides to execute God's orders. It is evident that this passage wants to explore how God communicated with Nebuchadnezzar and how He instructed him.

Midrash Tehillim pays little attention to the period of the restoration of the Temple and of Israel as a nation. Ezra and Nehemiah play no role of importance. It does not follow

²³⁸ The Midrash hardly mentions the rebuilding of the First Temple.

²³⁹ I Kings 6.7

²⁴⁰ Jeremiah 27.6

²⁴¹ 2 Kings 24.11

²⁴² 2 Chronicles 36.6

the tradition of the 'Knesset haGedolah' which is mainly associated with halachic teachings, nor does it share the interest in the return and rebuilding as is the case in for example Sefer Zerubbabel.

There are a few stories that give some information about the events in the Temple. However, these are not be regarded as some kind of witness' reports elucidating everyday's life in the Temple, but they are clearly non-historical stories. The stories in 22.31 and 106.8 were devised to demonstrate the extreme poverty of the Jews which even rendered the poor man's sacrifice impossible. The actual destruction of the Second Temple has only one reference, in 94.6 Rabbi Jose ben Chalafta teaches that the Temple was destroyed at the end of Sabbath, at the end of a year of release.

6.5.3 The destruction of the Second Temple

The catastrophe of 70 CE raised many questions. The Temple had always been the place par excellence to seek atonement with God. Now that the possibility of bringing sin and guilt offerings had ceased to be, new ways to come to terms with God had to be explored. In my opinion in Midrash Tehillim the emphasis shifts to prayer, to the festivals which is somewhat contradictory, and to the study of Torah.

The essence of prayer is present in the saying by Rabbi Isaac in 5.7. He concludes that since in the present days there is no prophet, nor priest, nor sacrifice, Temple nor altar all that is left is prayer. God has promised to Solomon that His eyes and heart will be near the Temple during all the days and His Shechinah is still present even though the Temple has gone, ergo the prayers will be heard (11.3). Midrash Tehillim points out that already in former days God had more delight in the prayer of an upright than in the sacrifice of a wicked, as expressed in 17.1, 90.1 and 102.1. In these three units it is Proverbs 15.8 that in all theses cases is introduced by וְשִׁירָה. The connecting element is the word תפלה that appears in the three Psalms and in the verse from Proverbs. This concurs with Rabbi Isaac's saying that prayer can replace sacrifice. Prayer is also important because it can lead to salvation. In the long passage on Daniel, 64.1, Daniel continues to pray three times a day despite the decree that forbade to do so. Perhaps this should be expanded to the concept that keeping one's religious obligations²⁴³ does not go without reward. In one passage²⁴⁴ Daniel's rescue is ascribed to the fact that his three friends prayed for him, here the prayer has the function of intercession. The units that speak of Esther have inserted the element of prayer²⁴⁵ and here too rescue and prayer have close ties.

²⁴³ Which are to be identified as the daily prayers in Rabbinic days. The minchah is mentioned by name.

²⁴⁴ 55.4. Neither Psalm 55 nor the book of Daniel describe a scene in which Daniel's three friends pray for him. Midrash Tehillim situates this prayer when Daniel is in the lions' den.

²⁴⁵ See the section that deals with the redemptions of the past.

Now that the effectiveness of prayer in the past is demonstrated²⁴⁶ and the belief that prayer can replace sacrifice has been expressed, it is time to pay attention to the prayers themselves. Most of the references to prayer are an attempt to describe the institutionalized prayers. In several passages regulations for praying are found. There is for example the idea that one should prepare his heart before praying so that God will hearken his prayer (10.7, 107.5 and 108.1), and 19.2 expresses the belief that one may not add anything to the Eighteen Benedictions. The build-up of Eighteen Benedictions is treated in 29.2 where each aspect is discussed, it contains three important statements connected to the theme of redemption. The Eighteen Benedictions call God the Redeemer, they assign the task to punish the wicked of the nations of the earth to the Messiah and they express the belief that God will rebuild the Temple. In 20.2 the Shemoneh Eshreh is connected to the 18 Psalms that precede it. In 4.9 is explained that the Shemoneh Eshreh should immediately follow the Blessing of Redemption so that Satan cannot bring accusations against the person who said it. Another subject that receives attention is that of the three daily prayers, which a man is obliged to say daily (1.21 and 64.1). According to 55.2 these prayers were instituted by the patriarchs. The earliest biblical account of these prayers is probably present in Daniel 6.11. By making this a patriarchal institution the three prayers gain authority as well as ancientness. Abraham instituted the Shacharit, which is based on an altered form of Genesis 19.27, Isaac instituted the Minchah prayer and Jacob was the founder of the evening prayer. This motivates David to utter these three prayers on a daily basis. In Psalm 96.1 the word (שירו) 'sing!' appears three times and in the first comment on this Psalm the explanation that it refers to the three daily prayers is given. The three prayers also appear in 72.4 where it is stated that the Shema should be said with the morning prayer. More details about the reading of the Shema and accompanying benedictions and customs on special occasions are found in 6.1. Saying three daily prayers can according to 17.4 avoid the punishment for not mourning the destroyed Temple.

The Midrash also contains some general information regarding praying. In 66.1 praying is considered as service (עבודה) to God and several biblical verses are quoted to demonstrate that this observation is true. What the darshan actually does is replacing תהלה of Psalm 66.2 by תפלה. Prayer will also be the kind of worship that will be used when God will be King over the earth. What is quite unusual about this latter view is that it does not show how the new Temple will fit in. According to 65.2 God can hear all prayers, even when said at the same time. God's interest in the kind of sins Israel seeks forgiveness for seems to suggest that genuine prayer can atone, and that prayer functions as a replacement for sin offerings. According to some Rabbis the gates of prayer are (sometimes) shut, but the gates of repentance are always open. Other Rabbis object to this teaching and say that the gates of prayer are also never barred (65.4) There is a parallel to the reward for studying Torah in Eretz Israel; praying in Jerusalem is as praying before the throne of glory (91.7).

²⁴⁶ The passages are scattered throughout Midrash Tehillim, but if one would arrange them according to the chronology of the events they discuss one can deduce that prayer was effective in the past and may be useful for those who live after 70 CE.

For our Midrash the most important festivals are Rosh haShanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot²⁴⁷. Several passages indicate that Rosh haShanah was the day on which the whole world was judged, see 4.4, 17.5, 27.4, 81.6 and 118.2. The precise date was determined by the Sanhedrin of below²⁴⁸ and Heaven acted accordingly. The texts more or less agree on what kind of preparations were made, 4.4 tells that the thrones are put in place, that the books are opened and that some of the angels will argue in favour (מלמדים זכות) and some will argue against (מלמדים חובה), in 81.6 mention is only made of accusers, סניגורין. In some passages we find the idea that the outcome of Rosh haShanah has not been made public, and therefore the question who has been victorious in this judgment is still unanswered.

In 17.5 a link is made to Yom Kippur and Sukkot. God who functioned as judge on Rosh haShanah accepts bribe (שוחד) (even) from the wicked in this world, these bribes are: תשובה, תפלה, צדקה. The ten days between Rosh haShanah and Yom Kippur are meant for repentance, this is made clear in 81.5 where Israel is encouraged to renew their deeds and it also plays a role in 17.5. The question that is yet unanswered is who was victorious in the judgment, Israel or the nations? It was not made known on Rosh haShanah, nor on Yom Kippur when Israel was fasting and wearing white clothes, and when Israel was praying²⁴⁹. Only on Sukkot it becomes clear that Israel was victorious because they carry the lulavs and citrons (17.5 and 118.2). According to 17.5 the people circled around the chazan of the community on Hoshanna Rabbah like they used to circle the altar. After the destruction of the Temple Yom Kippur had to be celebrated in a different way, the ritual shifted to fasting, praying and wearing white clothes (17.5 and 27.4). On that day Satan cannot come near Israel and he has to watch their behaviour on Yom Kippur. Here we see that the involvement of the people, the community, substitutes the role of the high priest and sacrifices. Also the three bribes, mentioned earlier in the derasha, show a shift towards behaviour towards God (repentance and prayer) and one's fellow humans (loving kindness).

The Sabbath is also important and is treated in some comments on Psalms 92 that is devoted to the Sabbath. These comments, along with a handful of other remarks elsewhere in Midrash Tehillim, mainly demonstrate the glorious position that the Sabbath enjoyed from the moment that it was created. One vision that is worth mentioning is found in 95.2. Here is said that if Israel would only keep one Sabbath as required, they would be redeemed immediately.

The Torah

In Midrash Tehillim the Torah and the study thereof is important. Midrash Tehillim digresses from the biblical accounts on the origin of the Torah. The Torah is reported to belong to the group of seven things that existed before the creation of the world²⁵⁰. It

²⁴⁷ In 17.5 these three festivals are mentioned together.

²⁴⁸ 17.5 or Beth Din as in 81.6.

²⁴⁹ 27.4

²⁵⁰ 72.6, 90.12, 93.3 The concept of seven (or six) things that preceded the world is already present in Talmud Bavli Pesachim 54A and Nedarim 70B.

was miraculously made (90.12); it was written with black fire on white fire, while it rested on the Lord's knee²⁵¹. The Midrash mentions several reasons why the Torah was given. In 75.1 and 76.4 is described how Israel was forced to accept the Torah since the earth started to quake. Out of fear that it would be returned to its former state of emptiness and chaos Israel accepted the Torah. This world-threatening situation is not found in the Bible. In two passages the Torah is considered a gift, that was given without price (15.4) and is in that way comparable to water that is also given without cost (1.18). This idea is also present in 68.11 where it is also said that the nations were unwilling to accept the Torah. The point of origin of the idea that the Torah is given for free may come from Isaiah 55.1 that is quoted in 15.4, but not in 68.11.

In 8.4 and 8.5 it is told that God needs sureties that Israel will live according to the Torah before He will give it to Israel. By means of a miracle the embryos and young babies start a conversation with God and promise that they will be a surety for their fathers²⁵². The second explanation in 8.5 says that God gave the Torah because of Israel's enemies. The actual giving of the Torah was according to our Midrash a memorable event. First Moses encountered five angels of punishment because Israel was provoking God. Moses was not able to confront them all and invoked God's help, as is written in 7.6 and 18.13. When God came down on mount Sinai, chosen because it was the lowliest, He was escorted by 22.000 chariots of ministering angels (68.10). The Israelites were crowned and/or given a weapon and were girded with linen.

In order to understand the impact on the religious life, one should look into what Midrash Tehillim regards as the purpose of the giving of the Torah. Our Midrash pays attention to the several aspects of the Torah. The study of the Torah can have beneficial effect on the life in the present world. Thus God will keep the body of one who studies Torah (32.4), the Torah is also the restorer of the soul (19.14) and the precepts of the Torah provide health to those who study it (19.15). God loves Israel because it has accepted the Torah (15.5) and His presence will dwell within Israel when Israel engages in Torah continually. The Torah is like a precious pearl (28.6) and it belongs to Israel for ever (118.4), but it is sometimes hard to study it as much as desired. The study of the Torah itself can weaken a man, although it will be with him in the hour of death (7.3). The harsh circumstances people lived in and sometimes also the prohibition to study Torah made it very difficult to meet the requirements (63.1). Add to this the notion that the study of the Torah does not only comprise the Written Torah, but also the Oral Torah²⁵³ and Mishnah and Talmud (1.16, 1.19, 12.4 and 68.7) and the predicament of the pious Jew becomes clear. The Midrash sometimes gives solutions such as wearing Tefillin will be reckoned by God as labouring day and night in the Torah, or reading the Shema in the morning and in the evening or reading two chapters in the morning and two chapters in the night can be a substitute (1.17). On the other hand Israel's poverty is also considered to be advantage. In 5.2 it is argued that poverty will ensure that Israel will occupy themselves with the

²⁵¹ Also in Deuteronomy Rabbah (Wilna) 3.12.

²⁵² See Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, note 84 on p. 110 for more instances of this theme of babies joining in singing.

²⁵³ See for example 12.4 where 49 arguments for cleanness and 49 for uncleanness are given.

Torah and as a reward they will inherit 310 worlds. Another reason that the Torah was given is that this way Israel will not busy themselves with idle words or evil tongues and when they do not slander they will have a part in the life to come (39.4). There are other texts that also shift the reward from the present world to the coming world. Those who study Torah in a true way, i.e. not using it for one's own sake, will have their dwelling place in Gan Eden (31.9). Passage 49.1 shows that the nations who argue that the labouring in the Torah is done in vain will be proven wrong in the world to come. The people who have studied diligently in the Torah will receive a reward without end. Studying the Torah in Erets Israel will make one behold the Shechinah (105.1). This does not necessarily imply that our Midrash was written in the diaspora; it may, for example be inserted by a later hand, or the darshan was aware of the many people living abroad. The reward for keeping the individual precepts is not made known publicly because the whole Torah should be kept, not only those precepts that will result in a great reward (9.3). The story about the students of Simeon ben Jochai who were jealous of a fellowstudent who made his fortune in India and the valley filled with golden denarii shows that not just the reward for studying Torah is laid away in the time to come (92.8).

At the beginning of this section I suggested that the study of the Torah was one of the ways to substitute the Temple. This was in part illustrated by the passages that were quoted above. In addition to these, there are also passages that speak of the synagogues and the houses of study wherein the Torah played a crucial role. In 87.4 Midrash Tehillim has God say that He loves the synagogues and the houses of study, which illustrates their special position. Other examples that mark their status are found in 1.8, 30.3 and 61.3 where David expresses the hope that his words and meditation will be read in the synagogues and houses of study. We also find an anachronism that Achaz (2.10) shut the doors of the synagogues and the houses of study. By making the synagogues and the houses of study an ancient institution, their importance waxes.

6.5.4 Redemption

In Midrash Tehillim the word גאולה is used to describe the redemption. It is derived from the verb גאל, that in the Old Testament was mainly associated with redemptions by God, but it is also used in the sense of 'to act as kinsman'. Other verbs that are used in connection with redemptive deeds are: ישע, נצל and פדה. These words are not always to be found in passages that speak of redemption, for example because the situation that calls for redemption or because the redemptive deeds are described.

In Midrash Tehillim a number of periods that are associated with redemption are presented in clusters, or in individual passages. The Exodus, the first redemption Israel experienced, has a different status than those redemptions connected to the later periods of oppression. The latter are called 'the four kingdoms' and they are: Babylon, Persia, Greece and Edom. The circumstances may differ and we find oppression in the form of forced labour, of limited political and of religious freedom. The servitudes to the first three kingdoms were ended by redemption, but the fourth servitude still endures and for Midrash Tehillim this is its historical setting. Edom is understood as the Roman Empire and its successor Christendom. This implies that what is portrayed

as the present in fact cannot be narrowed down to a century, but encompasses a few centuries.

The redemptions of the past, as opposed to that of the 'present', Edom, are all focusing on one or two aspects of God's nature.

Egypt

Without doubt the rescue from Egypt has always been the most appealing redemption Israel experienced. It is a demonstration of the power of God who did not shun the use of plagues and violence in His assailment of Egypt. The Exodus story has two major events; the plagues and the miracle of splitting the Sea. Both moments of redemption are found in our Midrash. There are two Psalms that mention the plagues that God brought upon Egypt, namely 78 and 105. This last Psalm offers a helicopter view of Israel's history and Midrash Tehillim has only a few derashot that speak of the Exodus. Psalm 78 contrasts and condemns Israel's current behaviour with the wondrous works that God did for them. The list of plagues that is given is, when compared to the book of Exodus, incomplete. The first, second, fourth, fifth, seventh, eighth and tenth plague are accounted for, but others are missing. Also the order in which they appear differs from Exodus. The narrative found in Exodus has many elements that do not play a role in Psalm 78 that considers the story of the plagues to be a given. First there are Moses and Aaron who communicate with God and who act as His spokesmen before Pharaoh. They often set a plague into motion by performing the ritual the Lord told them to do. The second person that is missing is Pharaoh himself. It was his stubbornness and lies that gave rise to the plagues. In a few instances Egyptian magicians were able to conjure a similar plague, this fact is also missing in the Psalm. Both renditions of the plagues leave out the reaction of the people of Israel; it is mainly an affair between God and Pharaoh. The darshan could have chosen to add the remaining plagues of Exodus, but he has opted for an exaggeration of the plagues that are mentioned.

Psalm 78 does not dwell on the duration of the plagues and the version of Exodus is also not very explicit about it. Exodus reports that the plague of the water turning into blood lasted seven days and that the darkness was present for three days, but for the majority of the plagues, no definite number of days is given. Thus not only the exact circumstances and consequences, but also the length of the plagues became subject to speculation. Passage 78.9 ends with the longest option; there existed a warning period of seven days followed by twenty-three days during which the plagues would rage. The issue of the length of the plagues and the intermediate time is also present in other sources. In Tanchuma (Buber) וארא 14 it is noted in passing that there existed a warning period between two plagues. According to Rabbi Jehuda this involved twenty-four days of warning and seven days for each plague. This is also found in Exodus Rabbah (Shinan) 9.12 in the name of the same tradents. Deuteronomy Rabbah (Wilna) 7.9 does not mention an authority, but does discuss the length of the plagues. The outcome there is that a plague lasted seven days and the intermediate time was twenty-three days.

In the other passages on the plagues in 78 there is a similar tendency of adding to the severity of the plagues. In 78.10 is made clear that all water the Egyptians tried to

drink would turn into blood, except for the water they would purchase from Israel. The plague of the blood turned out to be not only life-threatening, but also caused a reduction of their resources and it was a direct attack on their religion which venerated the Nile. In 78.11 the plague of the swarm (ערוֹב) is discussed and one of the ideas is that it was a 'mixture' (ערוב) of bears, lions, wolves and leopards. The frog, that in Exodus forms the second plague, is portrayed as a fabulous creature that as a God-sent agent performs a miracle. The Egyptian pantheon also knew a goddess by the name of Hekt that had the head of a frog, or to put it differently: the gods of the Egyptians were turned against the Egyptians and they found themselves unable to harm holy creatures. The same may be true for the species that made up the swarm; lions and wolves were also holy in the eyes of the Egyptians. In 78.13 and 78.14 the plagues are also intensified and this culminates in fifty plagues in Egypt and no less than two hundred and fifty plagues near the Sea in 78.15. The idea that every plague was accompanied by pestilence is expressed, and the plague of the killing of the firstborn is no longer limited to the firstborn of males, but includes the firstborn of females as well. In case there was no firstborn, a substitute was killed.

The comments on Psalm 18 which deals with Israel's escape from the Egyptians near the Sea have a completely different atmosphere. Passage 18.14 depicts God as a warrior who, by using natural phenomena, outsmarts and defeats Pharaoh. He uses arrows of fire, the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, hailstones and coals of fire, but the most impressive tool is the cherub He uses to fly on. In 18.15 the cherub reappears and it becomes apparent that God took it from the merkavah²⁵⁴. His love for Israel was so great that He took the first item within reach to attack the Egyptians. In 18.22 a theory with respect to the period Israel spent in Egypt is presented. They were supposed to stay four hundred years, but God decided to reduce the time to two hundred and ten years.

Midrash Tehillim has also some material that is not linked to a larger unit within the Egypt cycle. Two of these passages discuss the reason why Israel was redeemed from Egypt. In 114.4 and 114.5 the belief is expressed that Israel had earned merit and that this was the cause why Israel was redeemed. In 114.4 the merit was earned because Israel 1) did not change their names 2) did not change their language 3) did not reveal their secret and 4) were not loose in moral conduct. There are many parallels to this saying, which all differ to some extent from our passage. There is a group of six texts centered around Song of Songs 4.12 'My sister is a garden enclosed', which is understood as a sign of chastity. These texts are: Leviticus Rabbah 32.5, Exodus Rabbah (Wilna) 1.28 and Song of Songs Rabbah (Wilna) 4.1 which are much alike and Pesiqta de Rav Kahana parasha 11, Numbers Rabbah (Wilna) 20.22 and Tanchuma (Buber) בלק 25. The order of the four things Israel did not do is the same, but the third deed is described as 'there was no gossip among them'. An exception is formed by the Tanchuma and Numbers Rabbah that also speak of not revealing their secret (מסתורין or מסטורין). Midrash Tehillim certainly has some elements that are unique such as the biblical proof for the first deed. Psalm 114 verses 1 and 2 serve as evidence for the

²⁵⁴ The divine chariot mentioned in Ezechiel 1.

second deed and the active role of God in exposing the immoral woman. The other texts concentrate more on the chastity because they bring in Song of Songs 4.12, but in Midrash Tehillim all four deeds are treated equally.

The thought that Israel was redeemed because of certain merits is also present in 114.5. The first saying is in the name of Rabbi Jehuda who teaches that the blood of the Pesach lamb and the blood of circumcision flowed on the same day. The surprising element of the four other merits is that they yet have to take place. For three of these merits Exodus 2.25 is quoted because it depicts God as looking into Israel's future. The receipt of the Torah, the building of the Tabernacle and the sanctification of the Lord's name by Chananiah, Mishael and Azariah are proven by two quotes each. In the first two cases verses from Exodus are preferred, this was obviously not possible with the martyrdom of the three men. Isaiah 29.23 which was the first biblical proof for this martyrdom is repeated in the saying by Rabba Abba bar Kahana. It does not form an integral part of the passage because Exodus 2.25 and the second verse are missing and because the exact deed of the generation of Isaiah is not described in detail. This strong pattern is missing in the parallels. Exodus Rabbah (Wilna) 17.3 has an anonymous explanation of Ezechiel 16.6, which is not the key element of the passage. The core of this midrash is the smearing of the blood of the Pesach lamb on the lintel and the doorposts. Exodus Rabbah (Wilna) 19.5 focuses on the fact that an uncircumcised man may not take part in the Pesach-ritual. Ezechiel 16.6 forms the bridge between the blood of circumcision and the blood of Pesach, there is no explicit reference to the Exodus nor to the other merits mentioned in Midrash Tehillim. The closest parallel is Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer 28 which attributes the saying to Rabbi Eliezer. A new element is that the repetition in Ezechiel 16.6 is not only applied to the two kinds of blood, but also to the redemption from Egypt as well as the coming redemption from the fourth kingdom, Edom. The four other merits are not present in this parallel either, which can be explained by the fact that the main theme is circumcision, not redemption.

Almost all of the passages that are connected to the events in Egypt have parallels in well-known Midrashim such as Exodus Rabbah (Wilna), Tanchuma (Buber), Deuteronomy Rabbah (Wilna), and the Mechilta's. Surely the popularity of the celebration of Pesach must have played an important role in the development of stories of what took place during this glorious escape from Egypt. This may have also restricted the scope of the exegesis; people were familiar with the material and any additional characters or daring narrative expansions could have met resistance. This phenomenon also dominates the ideas about merit; it probably formed part of the general theology and perhaps the darshan concurred with the common view or refrained from giving a different opinion. It is only in the minor details that there is some room left for innovation and fantasy; such as the introduction of the frog in 78.13.

The Babylonian exile

This period encompasses the events during the exile to Babylon as well as the rescue of Daniel, who technically was saved during the reign of the Median Darius. In Midrash Tehillim the rescues of Daniel and his three friends are described, although not as extensively as the rescue from Egypt, nor do the passages form clear clusters.

The scattered nature of the passages makes it very difficult to see a certain development of ideas. The moment Israel was allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple is not a topic in Midrash Tehillim.

The situation in the Babylonian days differed from Egypt. The Jewish community in Babylon was not subjected to servitude: their main problem, which was not present all the time, was the restriction of religious freedom. This could be combined with an obligatory state religion. Refusal to adhere the state religion could be sentenced with death penalty, to which the three men and Daniel were condemned. It is probably because of the nature of the oppression that the reasons for the redemption are related to piety. While the Babylonian period was marked by two rescues, no comparable component was present that resembled the strained circumstances that Israel had to face in Egypt or near the Sea. In fact, the contrast with the peaceful departure from Babylon could not be greater! Cyrus obeyed the Lord instantly, issued a proclamation that encouraged the Jews to return and asked his countrymen for material aid. Also, if the darshan would have chosen to enlarge on the return to Israel, it would have been hard to avoid the creation of a human leader, such as Sheshbazzar.

Our Midrash is ambiguous about Nebuchadnezzar. On the one hand he is depicted as the bad genius who is responsible for the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem, the deportation of Judean citizens and who ordered Chananiah, Mishael and Azariah to be thrown into a burning furnace. Yet on the other hand the Midrash presents him as God's servant, albeit that he is not very willing to carry out His commands, albeit after practicing the pagan art of belomancy²⁵⁵.

In 28.2 multiple time levels can be discerned. Nebuchadnezzar tries to force Daniel's friends, Chananiah, Mishael and Azariah, into being idolatrous. As a result the predicament the three friends were in has become an example of Israel's perseverance and its loyalty to God; they were not the only people who remained faithful. Nebuchadnezzar is outraged by "the separation of Church and State" the three men advocate. They do acknowledge Nebuchadnezzar with respect to political issues, such as taxes, but refuse to obey him in religious matters. The kind of taxes that are mentioned, such as *annonae*, suggest a Roman rather than Babylonian background. Moses Aberbach in discussing the parallel found in Leviticus Rabbah (Wilna) 33.6 also points into this direction and suggests that it concerned Caligula who had his statue placed in the Temple. Daniel 3 does not say that the golden statue that Nebuchadnezzar had prepared was a representation, and as a result also 'deification', of himself. It is not a coincidence that the Rabbis who are quoted at the end of the passage are both men from Rome. This taken together with the identification-factor, i.e. the reference to 'us', makes it likely that this text was not only intended as a description of the past, but also, or especially, as an encouragement for the present. Another layer is present in the reasoning of the three friends. In the comments on Psalm 78 mention was made of frogs that acted upon God's request. In 28.2 the darshan goes one step further and depicts the frogs as role model and halachic 'authority'. The frogs also

²⁵⁵ This is inspired by Ezechiel 21.26.

appear in Talmud Bavli Pesachim 53B, where it is said that the frogs were not commanded to sanctify God's name, by means of *qal wachomer* the three men arrive at the conclusion that they should imitate the example. Midrash Tehillim differs with regard to two important aspects; it brings up the doctrine of זכות אבות, merit of the fathers, and introduces the concept of being awarded for performing a good deed. The Lord paid the frogs by letting them survive the hot ovens and preserved their lives while all the other frogs died. This twofold rescue cannot be copied to the situation of the three men. They realize that they, unlike the frogs, do have the obligation to sanctify God's name, which brings to mind the Talmud's remark that the frogs were not commanded to sanctify God's name. The pious frogs became martyrs voluntarily and spontaneously, but the three men were more calculating. They took into account the fact that their ancestors had earned merit and they knew that the frogs had been given a reward. The *derasha* transcends the miraculous rescue of the three men and brings encouragement and exhortation for the present. Also the praise of God at the end of the passage is not just a by-product of the discussion which verse brought inspiration. It is a confession of faith that addresses the audience²⁵⁶!

In 9.17 a milder view on the motives of the three friends is presented. There it reads: 'They did not hand over their lives on the condition to be saved, but to be burned. Why? *For love is as strong as death* (Songs 8.5) See how far the son loves You, therefore *To the leader, concerning the death of the son.*' This would imply that their deed was genuinely inspired by love for God.

A long passage on Daniel is present in the comment on Psalm 64 that is interweaved in the many quotes from Daniel that constitute a 'retold' biblical story. The darshan has given his account of the story a swing by pointing out that the attack on God's servants is not a demonstration of might, but rather a sign of weakness because they are not able to pose a threat to the Lord. King Darius is depicted more favourably than in the biblical story, he seems to have fallen victim to the political schemes of his satraps. After having been decoyed by them, he expresses his annoyance and throughout the passage his emotions and concerns are described. Daniel 6.11 mentions that Daniel prayed three times a day, a custom that, as our Midrash tells us, was known to Darius. Two of these prayers are identified; the minchah and the shema. The reason why the minchah is mentioned, is that the Bible says that Darius tried to save Daniel *until the sun went down*. According to Talmud Bavli Berachot. 26A-27A the minchah may be prayed until sunset. Darius, being familiar with the prayers, hoped that Daniel had decided not to pray the minchah, the time for the prayer had almost passed and it was not an obligatory prayer. The intermezzo ascribes similar devotion to the other exiles.

Daniel's punishment is in itself a miraculous happening. The text assumes that there were no stones in Babel and that it came flying. For a better understanding of the phrase that explains who saved Daniel 'Let a lion come and save a lion from the mouth of a lion', the parallel of Numbers Rabbah (Wilna) 13.4 needs to be brought in. The general idea of that passage is that 'God is known by Judah' (Psalm 76.2) and that

²⁵⁶ This comment on the remote verse is only present in Parma and Cambridge and in the remarks by Abraham Provençal.

Judah's honesty that saved Tamar has been rewarded with merit for his tribe. The text demonstrates that God is called a lion in Hosea 11.10 and Judah is called 'whelp of a lion' in Genesis 49.9. Daniel's descent from Judah is mentioned in Daniel 1.6. The explanation that God, a lion, saved a descendant of Judah, also a lion, is probable, yet the actual miracle is performed by an angel, corresponding to Daniel 6.23. In retrospect this also makes sense of Rabbi Jose's teaching that the angel had the shape of a lion. In our passage it was Daniel's piety and perseverance that made God save him and unlike Numbers Rabbah the merit of the fathers, in his case Judah, did not play a role. The magnitude of the threat only surfaces when Daniel's mocking opponents have to face the same danger. The poetic justice of this narrative is exaggerated, presumably to teach that injustice will not go unpunished. Psalm 64.11 functions as the conclusion and the lesson of the story is that trusting the Lord like Daniel did will turn one into an upright of heart who can praise the Lord.

Persia

The events that took place in Susan under king Ahasverus are recorded in the book of Esther. Unlike the two redemptions discussed above, this period was not marked by miracles or by a return to Israel. The name of the Lord is not present in Esther and thus the darshan is assigned with the task to associate God with the turn of fate of the Jewish community of Persia. Most of the Esther cycle is concentrated in the comments on Psalm 22. The majority of the exegesis is also present in parallels such as Talmud Bavli, Exodus Rabbah (Wilna), Genesis Rabbah (Wilna), the Mechilta de Rabbi Ishmael, Pesiqta de Rav Kahana, Leviticus Rabbah and Song of Songs Rabbah. In two unique passages, 22.6 and 22.7, Esther is depicted as praying to God. Esther bluntly asks God which situation was more grave; Egypt where male babies were murdered and where men who did not complete their tasks of forced labour were walled up or the present situation in Susan where all the Jews were about to be killed. This severe criticism is not found elsewhere. At the end of her prayer Esther mentions the fact that God immediately answered the cry of the fathers in Egypt, but that He has kept silent with respect to the Jews in Susan who have been fasting, praying and crying. It seems that she has deduced that they have not done enough or that they do not have any good deeds. If this indeed is the case, God should help them for the hallowing of His name. The concluding verse, Psalm 22.3, hints at the fact that the Lord in a certain way 'needs' Israel because of their praises, this is more clear in 22.19. In 22.7 Esther's courage and predicament is described and illustrated by a premature share-out of Esther's possessions. Here too God is introduced into the picture when Esther prays. In 22.16 another prayer by Esther is presented. Here she compares her own situation to that of Sarah who had to spend one night at the court of Pharaoh while Esther had to endure Ahasverus' embrace for years. Despite her devotion and her keeping the three mitsvot she had been given, no miracles are performed for her. There are also no parallels to this passage that calls God to account for His absence and lack of deeds. Only at the end of the comments on Psalm 22, in 22.27, is explained how God's redemption was put into motion. He first lengthened Ahasverus sceptre so that Esther's safe passing through the court was guaranteed. Then an angel caused Ahasverus to be favourable towards Esther, thus excluding the possibility that the redemption could be ascribed to Ahasverus' goodness which seemed to be the case in the Biblical account. Once Ahasverus's heart was won for the Jewish case, the edict

could be nullified and wicked Haman and his sons are heavily punished. The Midrash does not pay that much attention to Haman's downfall and proceeds to the feeling of relief and joy as described in Esther 8.16 'the Jews had light and gladness, and joy and honour'. The idea of light versus darkness is another theme found throughout the comments on Psalm 22. Especially Esther is a light to the Jews and the keyverse Esther 8.16 is quoted as early as 22.3. The events of the attackers of the Jews that were slain, as recorded in Esther 9, are not treated in the Midrash. The turn of events is more important for the Midrash than the downfall of the enemies.

The Greek kingdom

The material on the Greek kingdom is scarce and, unlike the other periods, Midrash Tehillim has no cluster of comments on the Hellenistic era. The number of passages that are solely dedicated to the Hellenistic period are very limited and the comments on this period are mostly found in about twenty passages that speak of the 'four kingdoms'. These four kingdoms are Babylon, Persia, Greece and Edom, that is the Roman Empire. According to 38.2, 40.4 and 52.8 Abraham chose the yoke of kingdoms so that Israel does not have to go down to Gehenna. Also Adam (92.10), Jacob (78.6) and David (3.7 and 17.9) had knowledge concerning these four kingdoms.

Several reasons can be given for the fact that Greece and the Hasmonean house, which ruled during this period, have received little attention in Midrash Tehillim. In 22.10, right in the middle of the passages on Esther, it is observed that Esther is the end of the miracles, upon which the objection is raised 'There is Chanukkah²⁵⁷!'. The response is simple: unlike the situation Esther was in, the events concerning the purification and rededication of the Second Temple are not recorded in the Bible. It is this apocryphal nature of the Books of the Maccabees that disqualifies Chanukkah as a miracle. However, this cannot have been the only factor since elsewhere the Midrash does not refrain from incorporating mythic or non-biblical stories such as David and the re'em which even appears in the comments on Psalm 22. Psalm 30 on the dedication of the Temple could have formed a good starting point for a derasha on the Hasmonean house. The Hasmoneans who were responsible for the revolt against the Hellenistic/Seleucid domination were not totally accepted, as becomes clear from the fact that there is no massheket on Chanukkah²⁵⁸ and from the hostile texts in Talmud Bavli Sotah 47A, Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 19A and Talmud Bavli Kiddushin 66A where the Hasmonean monarch Alexander Jannai is portrayed as bloodthirsty.

Besides the negative publicity there are two other aspects that may have played a role. The Hasmonean house made the High Priesthood hereditary and officiated as High Priest although they did not belong to the proper levite family. Mattathias ben Jochanan called himself High Priest, while he was not of the house of Zadoq. The Hasmoneans combined this function with that of being king, while they were not of Davidic descent. For Midrash Tehillim the main reason for somewhat neglecting the

²⁵⁷ The source of this passage is Talmud Bavli Yoma 29A where it appears in the name of Rabbi Assi.

²⁵⁸ Which may also be due to its apocryphal character.

Hellenistic period was the apocryphal character of Maccabees, though the religious and political dimensions may have played a role as well.

An interesting element that all the passages on the Greek kingdom, with the exception of 22.10, have in common is that there are no parallels. Sometimes parallels on other parts of the passages can be found, but there is no material on the Hasmoneans. Despite the fact that the comments on the Hasmoneans are mostly incorporated in the four kingdoms and hardly appear on their own, they are recognised as redeemers. Thus far I have only seen such an enthusiasm for the Hasmoneans in the Targum on the Song of Songs. In this Targum the Song of Songs is regarded as an allegory of Israel's *Heilsgeschichte* which it treats in chronological order²⁵⁹. The repetitions in the Song of Songs are for the targumist an indication of the cyclical character of the *Heilsgeschichte*. As P.S. Alexander points out²⁶⁰ this Targum discerns three peaks in the Israel's history, namely the reign of Solomon, which is Israel's ideal polity, the rule of the Hasmoneans and the days of the Messiah. Ranking the Hasmoneans besides Solomon and the Messiah show how much this Targum appreciates the Hasmoneans. Midrash Tehillim's position is moderate and stands in between Targum Song of Songs' enthusiasm and the somewhat negative attitude of the Rabbinic corpus.

In Midrash Tehillim 22.9, which forms part of the Esther cycle, two main parts can be determined: the three kingdoms with their human redeemers and the Messiah as the redeemer in the fourth kingdom and the rebuilding of the First Temple by Ezra and the rebuilding of the Second Temple which will be carried out by God. The keyword is עורר 'awake', in the last case it is clearly a religious awakening, but the character of the 'standing up' that is mentioned in the four kingdoms part is more difficult to interpret. Esther and Mordechai did have an influence on the politics, which can not be said for Chananiah, Mishael and Azariah. In the situations of the three friends and Esther religious freedom was cramped, which changed after their deeds. Like the Median period, the Greek period had also a political and a religious side. If the two parts function as parallels, which is suggested by עורר 'awake' and the structure of the counterpart, the part on the four kingdoms may speak of religious rather than political changes.

Midrash Tehillim 30.6, which comments on almost every verse of Psalm 30, speaks of three exiles, namely Babel, Media and Greece. The derasha pushes towards the dramatic change in events during Media but it contains some information concerning the Hasmoneans. They are called the ones who cured the 'I'-person of the passage, who presumably has to be identified as the congregation of Israel. The text may refer to a political deed which prevented the execution of the Greek decrees which could have made Israel go down into Gehenna, i.e. the result of violation of God's commandments. The negative tendency that was detected in the Talmud is not present

²⁵⁹ This is interrupted in 6.8 with a reference to Alexander the Great and in 7.9 by Daniel and the three Hebrew Children.

²⁶⁰ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, p. 57.

here. Mattathias' sons are called God's pious men (זמרו לה' חסידיו אלו בני מתתיהו), which was the honorary name of those who began the revolt against Antiochus IV²⁶¹.

Another passage that contains a variation on the four kingdoms theme is 67.1. The first part of the comment speaks of God's mercies and compassions which will never end, this element that has been introduced through the remote verse, Lamentations 3.22. The link to Babel is formed by Lamentations 3.23 followed by the vision Moses had of the Greek kingdom. This reminds one of the vision that Abraham had with regard to the four kingdoms in 16.7 and 38.2. Moses' reaction to this peek of the future is that he blesses the tribe of Levi, which is the tribe the Hasmonean house belonged to. Deuteronomy 33.11 which forms part of the blessing of Levi does have a violent character and can be regarded as a hint at the revolt. From this can be deduced that the political aspect is accounted for. The priestly blessing of Numbers 6.24-26 is here presented with the first word of each verse and serves as an argument to convince the Lord that He should bless the Levites as well. Quoting Numbers 6 also brings in the religious side of the Hasmoneans. The remainder of the passage tries to unite two different reasons for redemption. The first reason is that God rescues Israel for His name's sake and to make His strength known. The second justification is in contradiction with the first comment because it suggests that God redeemed because of Israel's righteousness.

In 5.11 we also find a variation on the four kingdoms. In the passage preceding it Babel is discussed. There is a description of Nebuchadnezzar's praise of God, which the Lord rejected. This is followed by a demonstration of the principle that sometimes an evil deed is punished right away, in this case those who were involved in the punishment of the three friends and Daniel met their death by means of their own devices. In the following passage the transition to the kingdom of Media and Persia is made, the end of this power is called the vengeance of the Lord. This explicit attribution to God is in accordance with the overall tendency of the Midrash since the book of Esther does not mention God at all. The Lord is also assigned an active role in ending the power of the Greeks for He has delivered them into the hands of the Hasmoneans. The Midrash makes a very important statement here; the Hasmoneans are regarded as God's instrument even though their actions have not been recorded in the Bible. The end of the passage contains a promise that Edom, Gog and Magog will also be taken care of. When the two passages, 5.10 and 5.11, are taken together it is about the downfall of three kingdoms, which will be succeeded by the fall of Edom and Gog and Magog.

Some information concerning the Greek kingdom is found in 18.35 where verses 49 and 50 of Psalm 18 are applied to five stages, the four kingdoms and the gathering of the exiles which coincides with the coming of the Messiah. All kingdoms, with the exception of the Greek kingdom, have at least two elements and one would have expected that Greece would have been mentioned together with Macedon. We find the somewhat strange expression שאף על פי שנמשלו בי היוונים, even though this nifal

²⁶¹ See E.E. Urbach, *The world and wisdom of the rabbis of the Talmud, The Sages*, fourth reprint, London 1995, p.p. 1-2 .

seems out of place, it is present in the two main manuscripts Parma and Cambridge. The text informs us of the fact that during the Greek dominion the Temple was still standing, which indeed was the case since it had only been desecrated by Antiochus. There is nothing on the Hasmoneans in this passage.

The last passage to speak of the Hasmoneans is 93.1. First is explained why Jeremiah calls God 'king of the gentiles' in Jeremiah 10.7, which was introduced as the remote verse. In the second explanation of Psalm 93.1, Rabbi Chanina says that God's clothing and majesty befits Him. This saying reminds of the more elaborate statement by Rabbi Chanina in 24.1 about Job. In the description of the seven garments of the Lord the clothes during the four kingdoms are also discussed. Quite surprisingly the garments of Mordechai, who wore a royal apparel, and the sons of the Hasmoneans are also described. The Hasmoneans were dressed in garments similar to those of the Lord, namely garments of zeal.

The parallels²⁶², with the exception of Pesiqta Rabbati, comment on Songs 4.10 and all mention ten garments instead of seven garments. Only the Pesiqta de Rav Kahana ascribes four garments to the four kingdoms, but it does not contain the additional information about Mordechai and the Hasmoneans. The passage in Midrash Tehillim is well composed and has a different verse for every garment, which is not the case in the parallels. The main tendency of this passage is to portray the Lord as warrior.

The scarcity of the material and the general reservedness in the passages on the Greek kingdom that are available impairs the opportunity to clearly describe the role of the Hasmoneans. It would appear that both the religious aspect and the political side of the Hasmoneans have received some attention. The Midrash is not as negative as the sections of the Talmud mentioned above and even seems to admire the Hasmonean house because it places it on the same level as the three friends and Esther and Mordechai. Oddly enough it is not stated anywhere what their exact deeds were and who their opponents were.

²⁶² Pesiqta de Rav Kahana שוש אשיש, Pesiqta Rabbati שוש אשיש, DeuteronomyR(W) ואתחנן and SongsR(W) 4.10.

7 Meshalim of Redemption

7.1 Midrash Tehillim 6.5, The sick man and the tardy healer

וּנְפִשִּׁי נִבְהֵלָה מֵאֵד וְאַתָּה ה' עַד מָתִי.

אָמַר רַבִּי הִטָּה אֶזְנֶךָ אֵין כְּתִיב כֹּאן אֵלָא וְאַתָּה ה' עַד מָתִי, אַתָּה הוּא שֶׁהִבְטַחְתָּנִי עִמּוֹ אֲנִכִּי בְצָרָה (תְּהִלִּים צ"א טו), וּמָהוּ עַד מָתִי, אָמַר רַב כַּהֲנָא מִשַּׁל לַחֹלָה שֶׁהָיָה מִתְרַפָּא עַל יְדֵי הָרֹפְאִים, וְהָיָה הַחֹלָה מִצָּפָה מָתִי יָבֵא הָרֹפֵא, בְּאַרְבַּע שָׁעוֹת, אוֹ בַּחֲמֵשׁ שָׁעוֹת, אוֹ בִּשְׁשָׁה, אוֹ בִּשְׁבַע, וְלֹא בָּא, עָבְרוּ עַל שְׁמוֹנֶה תִּשְׁעָה עֲשָׂרָה וְלֹא בָּא, עִם דְּמָדוּמִי חֲמָה הִתְחִיל מִמִּשְׁמֵשׁ וּבָא, וְאָמַר אִם שֶׁהָיָה עוֹד צָיִבְחָר נְפִשִּׁי יִצָּאָה, כֵּךְ אָמַר דּוֹד כִּשְׁהִיָּה רוֹאֵה שְׁעָבוֹד הַמַּלְכוּת מוֹשְׁכוֹת וּמִשְׁתַּעֲבָדוֹת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, צוּחַ וְאַתָּה ה' עַד מָתִי, שֶׁאַתָּה הוּא הָרֹפֵא שְׁלִי, וְשׁוֹהָא לְבָא אֲצִלִּי.

- 1. Passage absent in Frankfurt. All mss. except Florence have only וּנְפִשִּׁי נִבְהֵלָה מֵאֵד.
- 2. Absent in Florence, incomplete explanation in Paris.
- 3. Rav Kahana is mentioned in Florence, Vatican 76 and 81, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris.
- 4. Cambridge reads עַל פִּי. so do Vatican 76 and 81, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris.
- 5. Thus Parma. נֶפֶשׁ נִפְקָת in Cambridge, Florence, Vatican 76 and 81, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris.

My soul is very dismayed (and You, oh Lord, until when?) (Psalm 6.4). Rabbi said: ‘It has not been written here ‘Incline Your ear’, but ‘*and You, oh Lord, until when?*’. You are the one who has assured me *I will be with him in trouble* (Psalm 91.15).

What is *until when*? Rav Kahana said: It may be compared to a sick person who was to be healed by the physicians. The sick person was looking out for (the moment) that the physician would come. At the fourth hour, or at the fifth, or sixth or seventh hour? But he did not come. The eighth, ninth and tenth hour passed by and he did not come. When the sun was beginning to set (the physician) came and (the sick person) said to him: “Had you tarried yet a little while, my soul would have departed!”

Likewise spoke David when he saw the servitude to the kingdoms wherewith they would continually subject Israel, and he cried: *You, oh Lord, until when?* For You are my physician and You tarry to come to me!

Comment

In the present passage both parts of Psalm 6.4 are addressed, yet in a reversed order. The point Rabbi²⁶³ makes concerning the second half of the verse is that it is devoid of politeness and reverence for God. Other Psalms²⁶⁴ employ a more circuitous way to draw God’s attention and there a phrase as *וְאַתָּה ה' עַד מָתִי* would have been out of the question. The emphasis *וְאַתָּה* is explained by Psalm 91.15, which identifies God as the

²⁶³ Not all the manuscripts have Rabbi’s interpretation of Psalm 91.15 and in that case the mashal directly illustrates the lemma.

²⁶⁴ Psalm 31.3, 71.2 and 88.3.

one who will be with Israel in trouble and, as the mashal demonstrates, from whom help is expected. The mashal about the sick person who requires a healer, is most likely based on the previous verse, Psalm 6.3, that says רפאני יהוה 'heal me, oh Lord'.

The first part of the lemma, ונפשי נבהלה, is explained on two levels. There is of course the waiting for many hours that is bothering the patient mentally, but there is also the ailment that is so severe that his life, which is also called נפשי, is at stake. The setting of the sun is to be taken as a symbol of the patient who has almost died and so the patient has a good reason for his complaint. In the mashal the question עד מתי is present, it is answered in the mashal, but in the nimshal it is left unanswered. Israel does not know how long she will have to wait for redemption.

The manuscripts differ regarding the apodosis of the nimshal, which is in keeping with the tenor of the manuscripts. Florence, Vatican 76, Vatican 81, Trinity F18.39 and Paris do not speak of the kingdoms and apply the situation to David who is to be identified as the sick man. Parma and Cambridge have David as a spokesman for those generations that suffer from the servitudes imposed by the kingdoms²⁶⁵. The only parallel to the mashal is found in the Yalkut which has a combination of the two traditions in the manuscripts of Midrash Tehillim. In this case it leans more towards the group of Florence because it mentions Rav Kahana and because it does not apply the mashal to Israel, but to David. In Appendix B the full text is given.

7.2 Midrash Tehillim 10.1, The vineyard and the robbers

¹ למה ה' תעמוד ברחוק תעלים לעתות בצרה.

זהו שאמר הכתוב ומלין לצד עילאה ימלל (דניאל ז כה), [אמר ר' יוסי] ²אין הרשעים מזדווגין אלא אם כן מחרפין ומגדפין להקב"ה, שנאמר ומלין לצד עילאה ימלל, זה הקב"ה, ואחר כך (לקדושי עליונים) [ולקדישי עליונים יבלא] (דניאל ז כה), כמה דאת אמר קדושים תהיו (ויקרא יט ב), [אמר להם הקב"ה, הואיל ונתקדשתם לשמי עד שלא בראתי העולם, היו קדושים כשם שאני קדוש, שנאמר ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש (שמות יט ו), וכשם שאני עליון על כל העולם, כך אתם תהיו לי, וכשם שהלמ"ד עליון על כל האותיות, כך אתם, וכשם שהיו"ד קטנה, כך אתם קטנים, שנאמר כי אתם המעט מכל העמים (דברים ז ז)]. ומנין שנקראו ישראל עליונים, שנאמר ונתנדך ה' אלהיך עליון וגוי (דברים כח א), משל לאדם שיש לו כרם, והיו הלסטים רוצים ליכנס בתוכו ולא היו יכולין, שהיה מסוייג בגדר, מה עשו פרצו את הגדר, ואחר כך נכנסו לתוך הכרם, כך אומות העולם באים ומזדווגים לישראל, שהן כרמו של הקב"ה, שנאמר כי כרם ה' צבאות בית ישראל (ישעיה ה ז), והן מחרפין להקב"ה ואחר כך לישראל, שנאמר ומלין לצד עילאה ימלל (דניאל ז כה), ואח"כ לקדושי עליונים, ואח"כ רוצין לבטל את התורה, שנאמר (להשנא זימניא) [להשניה זימנין] ודת (דניאל ז כה), (זימניא) [זימנין] 'אלו המועדות, ודת זו התורה, שנאמר

²⁶⁵ There is an inconsistency in the reading of Cambridge and Parma because the most logical exclamation by David would have been שאתה הוא הרופא שלהן, ושוהא לבא אצלן 'You are their physician and You tarry to come to them', i.e. pointing to the relationship between God and Israel. This may have been an error by a copist, but perhaps it is because Parma and Cambridge have Israel as extra element.

מימינו אש דת למו (דברים לג ב), וייתהבון בידיה (דניאל ז כה), יכול לעולם, תלמוד לומר עד עידן ועידנין ופלג עידן (דניאל ז כה), ולמה אנו משתעבדין כל השעבודין הללו, על ש'הרחקת עצמך ממנו, לכך נאמר למה ה' תעמוד ברחוק.

1. Absent in Vatican 76 and Frankfurt.
2. While Parma is the main manuscript, modifications have been made. Thus the construction אין אלא is not present in Parma, but it is in Cambridge.
3. The dictum is present in Florence, Vatican 81. Trinity College Cambridge F18.39.
4. Florence, Vatican 81. Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 identify the times as שלש רגלים 'three pilgrimage festivals'
5. Florence, Vatican 81, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris speak of God in the third person singular.

Why, Lord, do You stand far off and (why) do You hide (Yourself) in times of trouble? (Psalm 10.1). This has to be seen in the light of: *And he will speak words against the Most High* (Daniel 7.25). Rabbi Jose said: The wicked do not engage in war unless they blaspheme and reproach the Holy One blessed be He, as has been said: *And he will speak words against the Most High*. That is the Holy One blessed be He. And after that (is written): *and he will wear out the holy ones of the Most High*. Like Scripture says: *You will be holy* (Leviticus 19.2) [The Holy One blessed be He said to them: Since you were hallowed for My name, even before I had created the world, you will be holy as I am holy, as has been said: *And you will be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation* (Exodus 19.6). And like I am higher than all the world, so will you be to Me. Like the lamed is higher than all (other) letters, thus (are) you. Like the iod is the smallest, thus you are small, as has been said: *For you are the smallest of all peoples* (Deuteronomy 7.7).] Where is Israel called the highest? It has been said: *The Lord, your God, will put you on high* (Deuteronomy 28.1).

It may be compared to a man who had a vineyard. Robbers wanted to enter the vineyard, but they could not because a fence had been erected. What did they do? They made a breach in the fence and after that they entered the vineyard.

Likewise the nations of the world came and wanted to engage in war against Israel for they are the vineyard of the Holy One blessed be He, as has been said: *For the house of Israel is the vineyard of the Lord of hosts* (Isaiah 5.7). They blasphemed the Holy One blessed be He and after that Israel. As has been said: *And he will speak words against the Most High* and after that *the holy ones of the Most High*. After that they want to abolish the Torah, as has been said: *to change times and law* (Daniel 7.25). *Times* these are the festivals. *And law* that is the Torah, as has been said: *and from His right hand a fiery law for them* (Deuteronomy 33.2). *And they will be given into his hand* (Daniel 7.25). Perhaps forever? Scripture says: *Until a time, times and half a time* (Dan 7.25). And why are we enslaved (during) all these servitudes? Because You have removed Yourself from us. Therefore it has been said: *Why, Lord, do You stand far off?*

Comment

As the expression זהו שאמר הכתוב signalled, we are dealing with a petichah. As usual for Midrash Tehillim the lemma is quoted at the beginning and at the end of the passage which means we are dealing with a regular petichah. Daniel 7.25 acts as remote verse and it may have a small pun with עילאה on the word תעלים of the lemma. The Daniel verse dominates the first part of the exegesis, sketching a situation in which God may be perceived as standing far off. Daniel 7 describes how God's authority is challenged by the eleventh horn of the fourth beast and with this remote verse the period of tribulation is introduced. Daniel 7.25 also illustrates Israel's special status. In Daniel's vision the identity of the לקדושי עליונים, 'holy ones of the Most High', was not specified and the darshan applies this description to Israel. The identification is twofold: they are not only regarded as the holy ones, but also as the 'high ones', thus explaining the plural form of עליונים where one usually finds the singular form עליון for God. The status constructus of לקדושי עליונים is therewith ignored and the darshan is to demonstrate that Israel is both holy and high. All the quotes in this part of the comment, including those in the speech by God which is not present in all the manuscripts, have one thing in common; they all have a link to God's commandments. In the case of Exodus 19.6 these are the Ten Commandments and in other passages it concerns more general commandments, for example Deuteronomy 28.1 that speaks of *mitsvot*. Israel's holiness and 'highness' has to be seen in the light of keeping God's commandments.

Now that we know this, the mashal is a little easier to understand. The choice of words that are used to describe the case of the mashal is deliberate and they are carefully chosen. In the mashal the nations are represented by robbers, for which not the Hebrew word גנב 'thief' is used, but the Greek loanword λῆστης. In this way already a distinction between Israel and the 'outsiders' is created. Despite the fact that Isaiah 5.7 is the only verse in Scripture where Israel is called God's vineyard, it has become a rather well known metaphor. God's main role in the mashal is that of being the owner, who has protected his property with a fence. The latter is not further discussed in the nimshal which mainly follows the petichah verse, but given the strong connection to the commandments in the earlier quotes and the expression מסוייג בגדר, I would like to argue that the fence represents the Torah. The Oral Torah is often called סייג the fence²⁶⁶ around the Torah, while the Written Torah itself is the גדר in this mashal. The expression פרצו את הגדר that is used when the robbers make a breach in the fence has a biblical character. A similar wording is found in Isaiah 5.5 where God threatens to destroy His vineyard in case it produces only sour grapes; He will פרץ גדרו. It is also used in Ecclesiastes 10.8 ופרץ גדר ישכנו נחש 'he who makes a breach in a fence, a snake will bite him'.

In the nimshal the darshan uses Daniel 7.25 to demonstrate step by step the events that follow the attack on God. It is here that it becomes evident that the mashal is polemical. Not only God is attacked, but also Israel, as well as the Torah and traditions that form

²⁶⁶ Mishnah Avot 3.13.

the heart of Israel's religious identity. In a few manuscripts this is stated more explicitly; they do not read המועדות 'the festivals', but שלש רגלים 'three pilgrimage festivals'. Already in the New Testament is written that two major events in Christianity took place during two of these festivals. In Matthew 26.2 Jesus' coming crucifixion is linked to Pesach²⁶⁷ and in Acts 2.1 the coming of the Holy Spirit is connected to Shavuot²⁶⁸. The festivals are not abolished, but they are changed into the Christian festivals of Easter and Pentecost. Also the abolishment of the Torah can be regarded as an act of Christians; circumcision was abolished, the first day of the week became the holy day instead of the Sabbath and there are of course the letters of Paul in which he presented a new approach towards the Torah. A striking element of the polemics in this mashal is that it is not dealing with issues that were discussed in the beginning of the polemics against Christians²⁶⁹, such as the godness of Jesus, (ab)use of Scripture, circumcision and anti-nomism. The only positive aspect of the servitudes that are mentioned at the end of the nimshal is that they are limited. It is likely that these servitudes are also to be seen in the light of religious oppression and that they are even harder to endure because God has removed Himself from Israel.

Yalkut Daniel 1066 is the only parallel to Midrash Tehillim 10.1. It shares the idea that the wicked wage war against Israel with Parma and Cambridge, but it shares most with the other manuscripts, including the mentioning of the three pilgrimage festivals.

7.3 Midrash Tehillim 10.2, The arrogant caravan and the stationhouse keeper

¹ [דבר אחר למה ה' תעמוד ברחוק].

זהו שאמר הכתוב ויהי כאשר קרא ולא שמעו (זכריה ז יג), אמר ר' יונתן שלש שנים ומחצה היתה שכינה² אומרה ומכרזת דרשו ה' בהמצאו (ישעיה נה ו), ולא היה מי משגית, וכן הוא אומר נדרשתי ללוא שאלו נמצאתי ללא בקשוני (ישעיהו סה א), אמר ר' חנינא משל לשיירא שהיתה מהלכת בדרך, כיון שחשכה לה, באה אצל הבורגנין, אמר לה הבורגנין הכנס לי לבורגן, מפני חיות רעות, ומפני הלסטים, אמרה לו השיירא³ אין דרכי ליכנס לבורגני, כיון שהלך בא עליו אישון לילה ואפלה, חזר ובא אצל הבורגנין, והיה צועק ומבקש עליו שיפתח לו, אמר ליה הבורגנין אין דרכו של בורגנין להפתח בלילה, ואין דרכו של בורגני לקבל בשעה זאת, בשעה שבקשתי לא רצית, ועכשיו אין אני יכול לפתוח לך, כך אמר להם הקב"ה לישראל, שובו בנים שובבים (ירמיה ג יד כב), דרשו ה' בהמצאו (ישעיה נה ו), ואין אחד מהן מבקש לשוב, אמר הקב"ה אלכה ואשובה אל מקומי הראשון (הושע ב ט, ה טו), כיון שנמסרו למלכיות ולאומות, הם צועקים למה ה' תעמוד ברחוק, אמר להם הקב"ה כשבקשתי מכם לא קבלתם, עכשיו שאתם מבקשים ממני איני שומע לכם, מדה כנגד מדה, הוי אומר ויהי כאשר קרא ולא שמעו (זכריה ז יג), שמא עד עולם חס ושלום, עד עידן ועידנין ופלג עידן (דניאל ז כה).

1. Not present in Vatican 76 and Frankfurt.

2. Cambridge follows Parma, but has three elements in common with Florence, Vatican 81 and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39. Among others it has עומרת instead of אומרה. The difference may be

²⁶⁷ πασχα, John 13.1, Mark 14.1 and Luke 22.1 also mention τα αζυμα.

²⁶⁸ πεντεκοστή.

²⁶⁹ 'Disputations and Polemics' in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

caused by an error due to the oral transmission, or by a graphical error.

3. Florence suffers from errors and misses among others this reply.

[Another explanation of *Why, Lord, do You stand far off?* (Psalm 10.1)] This is to be seen in the light of: *And it happened that when He called, they did not listen* (Zechariah 7.13). Rabbi Jonathan said: Three and a half years the Shechinah was saying and announcing: '*Seek the Lord while He may be found* (Isaiah 55.6). And there was no one who cared. And thus it says: *I would be sought by (those) who do not ask, I would be found by (those) who do not seek Me* (Isaiah 65.1).

Rabbi Chanina said: It can be compared to a caravan that was going on the highway. When it was getting dark, they came to a keeper of a station house. The keeper of the station house said to them: 'Enter my station house because (there will be) evil beasts and robbers (on the road).' The (people of the) caravan said to him: 'It is not our²⁷⁰ habit to enter a station house.' As soon as (the caravan) had gone, the time of night came upon them and darkness (as well). (The caravan) returned and they came to the keeper of the station house and they were screaming, begging him that he would open up for them. The keeper of the station house said to them: 'It is not the habit of a keeper of a station house to open up during the night. It is not the habit of a keeper of a station house to receive (guests) at this hour. The moment when I asked, you did not want and now I cannot open up for you.'

Likewise the Holy One blessed be He said to Israel: '*Return backsliding sons* (Jeremiah 3.14,22) *Seek the Lord while He may be found* (Isaiah 55.6).' And not one of them wished to return. The Holy One blessed be He said: '*I will go and I will return to My former place* (Hosea 2.9, 5.15). And when they were delivered to the kingdoms and the nations, they screamed: *Why, Lord, do You stand far off?* The Holy One blessed be He said to them: 'When I asked of you, you did not receive. And now when you ask of Me, I will not listen to you. Measure for measure!' Therefore it says: *And it happened that when He called, they did not listen* (Zechariah 7.13). Perhaps forever? God forbid! *Until a time, times and half a time* (Daniel 7.25).

Comment

In this second explanation on Psalm 10.1 the lemma is not quoted, yet the position of the passage in the Midrash along with the fact that Psalm 10.1 is mentioned in the nimshal make it apparent that Psalm 10.1 is the lemma. The comment is connected to Zechariah 7.13 which determines the exegesis to a great extent. The darshan has not quoted the second half of the verse, which reads *כִּן יִקְרָאוּ וְלֹא אֶשְׁמַע* 'thus they will call and I will not hear', while this is exactly the lesson that is taught in the passage. Although the verse is not entirely congruous in the sense that in one part of the verse the third person masculine singular is used and that in the other part a first person singular is used, the two parts of the verse can be understood as a principle of measure for measure. The reading strategy is proving that God warned, followed by the mashal

²⁷⁰ Literally 'my habit'.

which shows what may happen if one fails to heed a warning and in the nimshal the implications for Israel are spelled out. The nimshal demonstrates that the measure for measure principle, in Hebrew *מדה כנגד מדה*, is employed by God. Israel's response to what has befallen it is cast in the words of the lemma and at the end of the nimshal God answers Israel. The passage concludes with the words of Daniel 7.25, the remote verse of the previous comment.

Rabbi Jonathan's teaching on the warning by the Shechinah is found in a number of Rabbinic texts²⁷¹ and there is probably a shared tradition between these texts and Midrash Tehillim 10.2 because in the parallels Jeremiah 3.22 and Hosea 5.15 are quoted, which in Midrash Tehillim are used in the nimshal. Daniel 7.25, which appears in the nimshal, serves as source for the period of three and a half years. In the previous passage the unity of God, Israel and the Torah played an important role. In the present passage we find a variation namely the unity of God and Israel and the covenant, which needs to be kept by both parties. The context of Isaiah 55 quoted in this section is that God offers Israel a *ברית*, a covenant, similar to what God offered to Noah in Genesis 9.12 and to Abraham in Genesis 15.18.

After the futile attempt by the Shechinah to make Israel return, we find Isaiah 65.1 that suggests that God Himself tries to convince Israel to seek Him. While this verse is certainly inviting Israel, it also contains a warning; those who will not keep God's institutions will be repaid by God. It is this second setting, along with the principle from Zechariah 7.13, that is highlighted by the mashal.

The nimshal is, as seems customary in Midrash Tehillim, not entirely a copy of the mashal. Some elements stand certainly out. First there is Israel's rudeness that goes as far as not giving a reply to God's call and ignoring Him completely. In the mashal the two parties disagreed, but at least they were having a conversation. Another difference is that God's monologue does not mention the perilous situation about which Israel should be warned. The mashal reports nothing about an assault by evil beasts and robbers on the caravan, while Israel is handed over to nations and kingdoms. Thus Israel's fate becomes even more miserable than that of the caravan. In contrast with the station house keeper, the nimshal presents God's thought on the situation, which is done by means of Hosea 5.15; He decides to return to His former place. This should be understood as creating a distance by returning to heaven. The latter may explain why the text does not say that Israel returned to God because He had removed Himself, but the absence of returning has also to be understood as meaning that Israel has not repented. The lemma serves as the only utterance that Israel makes. The emphasis is again on God's words and it is here that the connection to Zechariah 7.13 is worked out. God is both harsher and milder than the stationhouse keeper. Israel is fully responsible for her own subservience to the kingdoms and the nations because they ignored God's call to repentance. An echo of this is found in the second half of Hosea 5.15 where God says that He will only return when Israel will have admitted its guilt and will seek Him.

²⁷¹ See the discussion of parallels at the end of this comment.

On the other hand God also shows mercy towards Israel because the period He will not listen is restricted, i.e. the measure for measure principle will not be applied for ever.

There are two groups of parallels to Midrash Tehillim, but they are both not on the mashal. The first group is connected to the words of the Shechinah, which in our text partly appears as verses in the nimshal. This certainly suggests a link between the Shechinah and these verses. The following texts belong to this group: Lamentations Rabbah (Wilna) petichah 25, Pesiqta de Rav Kahana 13.11 and Yalkut Jeremiah 257. The second group, formed by Pesiqta Rabbati 31 and Yalkut Psalms 647, deals with the measure for measure principle and one of the quotes is Psalm 10.1. It seems that Pesiqta Rabbati 31, and in its wake Yalkut Psalms 647, and Midrash Tehillim 10.2 share a tradition, but that they have not influenced one another.

7.4 Midrash Tehillim 11.1, The king and his beloved servant

למנצח לדוד בה' חסיתי איך תאמרו לנפשי נודי הרכם צפור.

זהו שאמר הכתוב ה' לי לא אירא מה יעשה לי אדם (תהלים קיח ו), משל למלך שהיה לו עבד והיה מחבבו מכל עבדיו, והיו בניו מתקנאין בו, אמר מרי חייס³ לי מה⁴ בר נש יכול לי. נודי הרכם צפור, אמר ר' אחא בשעה שגלו ישראל היו⁶ אומות העולם אומרים להגלותן ממקומן, אמרו⁵ כנוד נדדו הרב ותלמידו, נודו כתיב נודי קרי, כלפי מעלה וכלפי מטה אמרו, כלפי מעלה כצפור נודדת מן קנה כן איש נודד ממקומו (משלי כז ח), ואין איש אלא הקב"ה, שנאמר ה' איש מלחמה (שמות טו ג), ואין מקומו אלא בית המקדש, שנאמר זאת מנוחתי עדי עד (תהלים קלב יד).

1. Missing in Frankfurt. Buber presents an eclectic text.

2. Parma and Cambridge refer to females that are envious. Parma has an unspecified , היו מתקנות , ובנותיו מתקנות. The other mss, except Paris, have היו עבדיו מתקנאין בו. Paris speaks of jealous sons , והיו בניו מתקנאים , but its presentation of this passage is not very reliable.

3. Parma and Cambridge have מרי חייס לו 'my master favours him', which is a mistake.

4. Parma has בר נש , Florence, Vatican 81, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 speak of מאן יכול and other variants are איניש and אינש.

5. Parma only.

6. Vatican 76, Vatican 81, Florence and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 mention that the nations rejoiced (שמחים) when Israel was exiled.

7. The identification of מקומו as the Temple is missing in Parma and Cambridge.

To the choirmaster, by David, I have sought refuge in the Lord, how could you say to my soul '*flee to your mountain (like) a bird*'?(Psalm 11.1) This is to be read in the light of *The Lord is mine, I will not fear. What can man do to me?*(Psalm 118.6).

It may be compared to a king who had a servant whom he loved more than all the other servants. The men of his household were jealous of him, but he said: 'My master favours me, what can a man do to me? '*Flee to your mountain (like) a bird*'.

Rabbi Acha said: At the moment Israel was exiled, the nations of the world were talking about exiling them from their place and said: 'Let the master and his student flee!' 'Nudu' is the ketiv, 'nudi' is the qereh.

Thus they spoke to (God) above as well as to (Israel) below. To (God) above? *Like a bird that flees from its nest likewise Man flees from His place* (Proverbs 27.8). There is no other man than the Holy One blessed be He, as has been said: *The Lord is a man of war* (Exodus 15.3). There is no other place than the Temple, as has been said: *This is my resting place for ever and ever* (Psalm 132.14).

Comment

Psalm 11.1 is a difficult verse to understand. In the first part it says that David has taken refuge in the Lord, which is then contrasted with a saying in the second part that is puzzling in more than one way. There is the grammatical problem of the imperative in the second person plural נודו, which does match with the plural possessive pronoun in הרכם, but does not agree with the singular form of the bird²⁷². In Midrash Tehillim the lemma is initially quoted with the imperative in the second person singular נודי, which is the qereh. But even when the saying is grammatically correct, it is puzzling. Who would say this to David and what does it mean? These questions have been picked up by the darshan. Midrash Tehillim, and in its wake Yalkut Shim'oni, and Talmud Bavli are the only texts that deal with this verse.

For the comment on the first part of the lemma Psalm 118.6 is quoted to explain what it means to seek refuge with the Lord. At first sight Psalm 118.6 does not have a common factor, but in verses 8 and 9 the same verb חסה 'to seek refuge' as in Psalm 11.1 is present. The question of Psalm 118.6 appears somewhat reworded in the mashal. The mashal is not complete because the nimshal is either missing or suppressed. It is possible to devise the nimshal; one who is beloved by God does not have to fear from human beings. What we do not know is the identity of the beloved person. Is it David who feels that he has nothing to fear from his opponents or from his enemies? Or should one read it in combination with the second part of the derasha and conclude that it is Israel who has sought refuge with God and is envied by the nations?

Rabbi Acha's teaching is even more obscure. He comments on the second half of the lemma, that is again quoted with the qereh נודי and remarks that the nations were exiling Israel. In this remark two forms of the root אמר are found, which makes little sense. The Buber text then quotes the expression הרב ותלמידו that may be incomplete because in other texts²⁷³ one finds האב ובנו הרב ותלמידו that demonstrates the unity of such a pair. The saying in Midrash Tehillim 11.1 is only attested by Parma, where is written כניד and not כנוד, which makes it even more complicated. In its present form the purpose of this saying appears to be twofold: it speaks of two people that have a close relationship and form an inseparable pair, for one cannot be a teacher without a student and vice versa²⁷⁴. The saying also paves the way for the plural form of the ketiv נודו, because two people are involved. The order of the saying, the teacher followed by his student, is then applied to God and Israel, למעלה 'above' is a reference

²⁷² Some translations read it as כצפור 'like a bird' which does not resolve the grammatical problems. See <http://bible.cc/psalms/11-1.htm>.

²⁷³ Tosefta Sanhedrin 7.2, TB Eruvin 73A, TB Kiddushin 30B, TB Sanhedrin 36A.

²⁷⁴ In 14.7 there is a similar expression כנגד הרב וכנגד התלמיד, which is also attested for by Parma.

to God and מטה 'below' points to Israel. Proverbs 27.8 shares two elements with the lemma; the bird (כצפור) and the fleeing (נוודת). In its second half two openings for exegesis are found: by means of Exodus 15.3 God can be identified as the איש and in a less direct way is shown that the מקום of Proverbs is God's resting place, the Temple. The latter explanation is not based on a verbal tally, but on association.

In retrospect we can now, be it partly, understand Rabbi Acha's saying. The nations tried to exile Israel from its place, which is God. They had first made God flee from His place, which is the Temple, and thereafter the nations make Israel flee. This may refer to a Christian or Islamic conquering of the Temple. If this is indeed the case this passage has to be understood, and if the mashal should be applied to Israel and God, the message of the mashal at the beginning of the passage also changes. The feeling of security has turned out to be unjustified for how can Israel say that they have taken refuge with God when God Himself flees²⁷⁵? There exists a tension between the idea of the Shechinah leaving the Temple, which since Ezechiel was considered a positive act because the Shechinah went in exile with Israel and did not leave Israel alone, and the idea that God's presence should remain hovering over the Temple site while Israel might be in exile.

The parallel from Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 107A places Psalm 11.1 in the context of David's adultery with Bath Sheba. David fears that his sin will cause people to say that he, God's mountain has to flee. Other than the Psalm verse, there is nothing in common with our text. The later parallel of Yalkut Psalms 652 combines Sanhedrin 107A and Midrash Tehillim, leaving out the difficult teaching on the master and the student and it also does not ask where God is. Only the third parallel, Yalkut Psalms 875, contains the mashal the about the servant which is placed in the setting of David facing Goliath.

7.5 Midrash Tehillim 14.6, The prince and his wedding

ימי יתן מציון ישועת ישראל.

אמר ר' לוי כל הברכות והטובות והנחמות שמביא הקב"ה על ישראל, מציון מביאין, תורה מציון, שנאמר כי מציון תצא תורה (ישעיה ב ג), ברכה מציון, שנאמר יברכך ה' מציון (תהלים קכח ה וקלד ג), הופעה מציון, שנאמר מציון מכלל יופי אלהים הופיע (תהלים נ ב), סעד מציון, שנאמר ומציון יסעדך (תהלים כ ג), חיים מציון, שנאמר כטל² חרמון שירד על הררי ציון כי שם צוה ה' את הברכה חיים עד העולם (תהלים קלג ג), גדולה מציון, שנאמר ה' בציון גדול (תהלים צט ב), ישועה מציון, שנאמר מי יתן מציון ישועת ישראל (תהלים יד ז). את מוצא שני פעמים כתיב בספר תילים מי יתן מציון ישועת ישראל, אחת בספר ראשון, ואחת בספר שני, ולמה, אמר ר' לוי כנגד הרב וכנגד התלמיד, [הרב זה משה, אמר מי יתן והיה לבבם זה להם (דברים ה כו), והתלמיד זה דוד, אמר מי יתן מציון ישועת ישראל (תהלים יד ז ונג ז). דבר אחר] הרב זה הקב"ה, שאמר מי יתן והיה לבבם זה להם (דברים ה כו), התלמיד זה משה, שאמר ומי יתן (את) כל עם ה' נביאים (במדבר יא כט), ולא נתקיימו דברי הרב ודברי התלמיד בעולם הזה, אבל לעתיד לבא מתקיימים דברי שניהם, דברי הרב ונתתי לכם לב חדש (יחזקאל לו כו), ודברי התלמיד אשפוך [את] רוחי על

²⁷⁵ The matter is only taken up again in 11.3 where several Rabbis, including Rabbi Acha, suggest that the Shechinah has not left the Temple.

כל בשר (יואל ג א). דבר אחר למה שתי פעמים, ר' יודן בשם ר' יהושע בן לוי אמר לפי שהתינוקות של בית רבן אומרים שני פעמים ביום שחרית וערבית שובנו אלהי ישענו והפר כעסך עמנו (תהלים פה ה), לכך אמר דוד [שני פעמים] מי יתן מציון. אמר ר' תנחומא אמרית יתיה לפני ר' חנינא ואמר לי לא מן השם הוא זה, אלא מפני שכתוב שתי פעמים הושיענו אלהי ישענו, אחת בתילים, ואחת בדברי הימים, לכך נאמר שתי עמים מי יתן מציון. 'משל לבן מלך שאירס לבת המלך, וקבעו פרוסטגמא ביום פלוני, בנו של מלך מצפה לשמחתו, בתה של מלך מצפה לשמחתה, ומי מעכב, הוי אומר פרוסטגמא מעכב, כך הקב"ה מצפה לישועתן של ישראל, וישראל מחכין לישועתו של הקב"ה, ומי מעכב, פרוסטגמא, שנאמר כי יום נקם בלבי [ושנת גאולי באה] (ישעיה סג ד).

1. Absent in Frankfurt.

2. Buber has made modifications that are not always accounted for. . The quote from Psalm 133.3 does not mention the Hermon. This is the case in Parma, Cambridge and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39, the other manuscripts quote the second half of the verse and are therefore not relevant.

3. Florence has no proper introduction to the master and the student, but it does mention the fact that their words will not be established in this world. Paris only has the second application of the master and his student, but fails to explain that God is the master and Moses His student.

4. Paris ascribes the teaching to Rabbi Nehemiah. Florence, Vatican 76, Vatican 81 and Paris have 1 Chronicles 16.35, which may be influenced by Rabbi Chanina's teaching on this verse. The additional teaching on the schoolchildren that appears in Cambridge and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 also contains this verse.

5. Nimshal is only complete in Parma, Cambridge and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39. They have that God מצפה, but the other mss have the parallel of הקב"ה מחבה and וישראל מחבין, which seems a synchronisation. As one can deduce from the examples given, Trinity concurs with Parma and Cambridge, while in for example 11.1 and 11.4 it had much in common with Vatican 81.

Who will give the salvation of Israel out of Zion? (Psalm 14.7). Rabbi Levi said: All blessings, good things and consolations which the Holy One blessed be He will bring upon Israel, He will bring (them) out of Zion. The Torah (will go forth) out of Zion, as has been said: *The Torah will go forth out of Zion* (Isaiah 2.3). Blessing (will go forth) out of Zion, as has been said: *The Lord will bless out of Zion* (Psalm 128.5, 134.4). The Appearance (will go forth) out of Zion, as has been said: *Out of Zion the perfection of beauty, God will shine* (Psalm 50.2). Support (will go forth) out of Zion, as has been said: *Out of Zion He will support you* (Psalm 20.3). Life (will go forth) out of Zion, as has been said: *Like the dew of the Hermon which descends on the mountains of Zion, there the Lord commanded the blessing, (even) life for evermore* (Psalm 133.3). Greatness (will go forth) out of Zion, as has been said: *The Lord is great in Zion* (Psalm 99.2). Salvation (will go forth) out of Zion, as has been said: *Who will bring the salvation of Israel out of Zion?* (Psalm 14.7).

You will find that *Who will bring the salvation of Israel out of Zion?* has been written twice in the book of Psalms; one in the first book and one in the second book. Why? Rabbi Levi said: Corresponding to the master and corresponding to the student. [the master is Moses who said: *Who will give such a heart to them?* (Deuteronomy 5.26) and the student is David who said: *Who will bring the salvation of Israel out of Zion?* (Psalm 14.7, 53.7).

Another explanation] The master is the Holy One blessed be He, as has been said: *Who will give such a heart to them?* (Deuteronomy 5.26) and the student is Moses who said: *Who will give that this people of the Lord will be prophets?* (Numbers 11.29). The words of the master and the words of the student will not be fulfilled in this world, but the words of both of them will be fulfilled in the time to come. The words of the master: *and I will give you a new heart* (Ezekiel 36.26) and the words of the student: *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh* (Joel 3.1).

Another explanation on why (*Who will bring the salvation of Israel out of Zion?* is written) two times. Rabbi Judan said in the name of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi: Because the schoolchildren say it two times a day: morning and evening prayer: *Restore us, God of our salvation, and annul Your anger with us* (Psalm 85.5). Therefore said David (twice) *Who will give out of Zion?* Rabbi Tanchuma said: When I was saying this to Rabbi Chanina he said to me: 'This is not the real reason, but because it has been written two times: *Save us, oh God of our salvation* (Psalm 106.47), once in the Psalms and once in Chronicles²⁷⁶. Therefore has been said twice: *Who will give out of Zion?*

It may be compared to a prince who was engaged to a princess and the preliminary events were appointed for a certain day and the prince was looking forward to his joy and the princess was looking forward to her joy and what delayed it? You must admit that the preliminary events delayed it

Likewise the Holy One blessed be He looks forward to the salvation of Israel and Israel waits for the salvation of the Holy One blessed be He, as has been said: *For the day of vengeance is in My heart [and the year of My redeemed comes]* (Isaiah 63.4).

Comment

In the present passage three exegetical blocks can be discerned. These are the seven good things that God will bring forth from Zion, the issue of the duplicate verses and thirdly the mashal that is connected to the lemma only.

The question who is the source of salvation formulated in Psalm 14.7 as *Who will give the salvation of Israel out of Zion?* has been singled out for further investigation. This question is immediately answered by a doctrine stating that God is the One who brings good things out of Zion. The purpose of listing six other wondrous things that come forth from Zion is not only the glorification of Zion, but foremost it seeks to establish a connection between Zion and the Lord. In all the additional cases the proof verses mention God as the One who brings the things forth from Zion, only the lemma does not say that it is God who will bring salvation. The lemma is the last of the seven good things and by now the audience will automatically assume that the person hinted at in Psalm 14.7 is the Lord.

In the second exegetical block the similarity in wording between Deuteronomy 5.26 and Psalm 14.7 and again Deuteronomy 5.26 and Numbers 11.29 is pointed out. For

²⁷⁶ I Chronicles 16.35.

the first two verses their 'authors', Moses and David, are presented as a pair. A similar strategy is used for Deuteronomy 5.26, which is now understood as a saying by God, and for Numbers 11.29 that was said by Moses. The last two verses are placed in a prophetic setting and the new heart and spirit will only be given to Israel in the time to come. Three out of these four verses, Numbers 11.29 and the two proof verses from Ezechiel and Joel, all contain a reference to God's Spirit.

The second part of this block does not seek the solution in the existence of a pair of speakers, but in the repetition of the words 'God of our salvation' by the schoolchildren. This particular saying does not seem to be part of a liturgy and the parallel in Pesiqta Rabbati 41 says that the children quoted Psalm 106.47. In Midrash Tehillim there are two opinions about the verses that gave the impetus to this tradition and it seems that the opinion by Rabbi Chanina who thinks that the similarity of Psalm 106.47 and I Chronicles 16.35 is the reason, is the most acceptable to the darshan. Like in the first block, the comments help to identify God as the person who will bring Israel's salvation, which is clearly stated in Psalm 106.47.

By means of the mashal two main thoughts are communicated: God is the Redeemer and like Israel He longs for the redemption, but He is obliged to wait. In the mashal the actual marriage cannot take place before the פרוסטגמיה and therefore the latter is experienced as a delaying factor. The mashal reveals nothing about the nature of the פרוסטגמיה. Buber assumes that it is a loanword from Greek and that it is derived from προθεσμία, a day appointed beforehand or a fixed time within which a certain activity such as paying money is to be carried out²⁷⁷. Jastrow²⁷⁸ associates it with προγαμία which can be a sacrifice before the wedding, or the whole of things that occur before the wedding. A third possibility is to link it to πρωτογαμία which is a preliminary Jewish marriage festival²⁷⁹. Lieberman²⁸⁰ also suspected that πρωτογαμία has Jewish roots, although he later changed his view²⁸¹. For each of these three possibilities, some alterations to the word פרוסטגמיה need to be made. There does not seem to be a special reason why this word has been chosen, if there is a link to a historical event or person, it now eludes us. In the nimshal this delaying factor is explained by Isaiah²⁸² 63.4 implying that God's day of vengeance needs to take place first before the redemption can be brought about.

²⁷⁷ Liddell, H.G., Scott, R., Jones, R., *A Greek-English Lexicon with a Supplement*, Oxford, 1968, p. 1481

²⁷⁸ Jastrow, M., *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature*, New York, 1992, p. 1219.

²⁷⁹ Liddell, Scott and Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 1545.

²⁸⁰ Lieberman, S., *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, Philadelphia, 1942, p.9.

²⁸¹ Rothman, J. and Grégoire, H. *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* IX, Brussels, 1949, p. 411. With respect to an inscription in Carthage (Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum ol VIII, No 25045) is argued that it is not necessarily referring to a preliminary marriage festival, but to a marriage between a bachelor and a virgin, which would also be one of the views found in Greece of those days. Thus the word does not necessarily have only Jewish roots, Greek roots are certainly possible as well. In our case this preliminary marriage festival would be the most appropriate meaning because it fits in the best in the relationship between God and Israel.

²⁸² Isaiah 63.4 plays a different role in 7.17 and 9.2 where it is used to demonstrate that all knowledge about the redemption is not available to humankind because it is hidden in God's heart.

In Leviticus Rabbah 24.4 a parallel can be found on the teaching by Rabbi Levi on the things that God will bring forth from Zion. The two texts differ with respect to the Scriptural quotes, the number of things that are brought forward and the place of Psalm 14.7. Midrash Tehillim has strategically placed Psalm 14.7 at the end of the teaching. Pesiqta Rabbati 41 offers a parallel on the teaching of the schoolchildren and clearly connects the passage to salvation. The lemma on which is commented is Joel 2.1, that also featured in Leviticus Rabbah 24.4. Yalkut Psalms 663 is the only text that offers a parallel to the mashal. It seems to represent both streams of manuscripts of Midrash Tehillim²⁸³.

7.6 Midrash Tehillim 14.7, The father of the bride is the happiest man

¹ יגל יעקב ישמח ישראל.

² יגל אברהם וישמח יצחק אין כתיב כאן, אלא יגל יעקב ישמח ישראל, ולמה יעקב שמח מכל האבות, אמר ר' שמעון בן לקיש בשעה שישראל חוטאין, יעקב מרגיש ממערת המכפלה, ³ שנאמר כי עתה הזנית אפרים נטמא ישראל (הושע ה ג), וכן כשתבא השמחה ⁵ והגאולה, יעקב שמח בה יותר מכל האבות, לפי שהוא מזומן לסעודה, שנאמר שמע אלי יעקב ⁴ (עבדי) וישראל מקוראי (ישעיה מח יב), מה מקוראי, מזומניי, כמה דאת אמר ויתן להם מקום בראש הקרואים (שמואל א ט כב), ורב אמר ⁶ משל למי שמשיא את בתו, מי שמח, לא אביה של כלה, שנאמר לכן כה אמר ה' אל בית יעקב אשר פדה את אברהם וגו' (ישעיה כט כב), הוי אומר כשתבא הגאולה ⁷ לעולם לישראל, יעקב ישמח בה יותר מכל האבות, לכך נאמר יגל יעקב ישמח ישראל.

1. Absent in Frankfurt.

2. Thus the other mss, not in Parma and Cambridge.

3. Florence, Vatican 76 and Paris quote Hosea 6.10 בבית ישראל ראיתי שעריריה שם זנות לאפרים נטמא ישראל.

4. Thus Parma and Cambridge. There is no support by BHS's critical apparatus for this.

5. Only Parma and Cambridge

6. Introduction to mashal is incomplete in Parma and Cambridge.

7. None of the mss supports this.

Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad (Psalm 14.7). It has not been written here 'Abraham will rejoice and Isaac will be glad', but *Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad*. And why will Jacob of all the patriarchs be glad? Rabbi Simeon ben Laqish said: The moment Israel sins, Jacob in the cave of Machpelah is affected, as has been said: *For now, oh Ephraim, have you committed harlotry and Israel is defiled* (Hosea 5.3). So when the gladness and the redemption comes, Jacob will be glad in it more than all the patriarchs because he has been invited to the feast as has been said: *Listen to Me, oh Jacob, My servant, and Israel My called* (Isaiah 48.12). What is 'My called'? My invited, like Scripture says: *and he gave them a place (to sit) in the chiefest (place) among those who were called* (I Samuel 9.22).

²⁸³ See apparatus.

Rav said: It may be compared to a man who gave his daughter away in marriage. Who is glad? Is it not the father of the bride? As has been said: *Therefore, thus speaks the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, to the house of Jacob* (Isaiah 29.22).

You must admit that Jacob of all the patriarchs will be glad the most when the redemption will come to Israel for ever. Therefore has been said: *Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad* (Psalm 14.7).

Comment

This derasha comments on the second part of Psalm 14.7 and the focus is no longer on the relationship between God and Israel, but on the relationship between Jacob and Israel. This subject is brought up by the darshan because he wonders why the verse mentions Jacob and Israel. There are two levels on which the darshan plays: first there is Jacob who is the only patriarch mentioned in this verse and secondly Jacob can be identified as Israel, the name he has been given in Genesis 32. The explanation is in fact a praise of Jacob: his connection to Israel is so intense that he shares in their sins and in their gladness. Hosea 5.3 plays on the identification of Israel as Jacob and on a second identification, namely Ephraim that signifies Israel. The darshan took a very powerful verse to illustrate this bond between Jacob and Ephraim (Israel) since Ephraim was Joseph's beloved son, who in his turn was Jacob's beloved son. In Genesis 48 is described how Jacob blessed Ephraim with the blessing of the firstborn, even though this blessing belonged to his brother Manasseh.

The joy that Jacob will experience is then contrasted to that of the other patriarchs: Jacob will be the happiest of them all because he alone has been invited to the feast. This is proven by the quotes from Isaiah and Samuel and the idea is further taken up in the mashal. Because of this prolepsis the effect of the mashal is spoilt and it has become a hollow device.

Despite its promising start, the mashal attributed to Rav is not a smooth mashal. The protasis is not spun out to an appropriate size and as a result the apodosis needs aid, the word אֲל , to make its point. The nimshal is somewhat better, but here too the flow of events is missing. Nevertheless the idea of the mashal can be easily understood because it consists of questions which should invite the audience to follow his reasoning. Rav's mashal is rather simple and does not even tell a fictional story because it mainly presents rhetorical questions. Surely the father of the bride will be the happiest man on earth the day his daughter marries. In the application of this mashal an additional step is required because up to this point the relationship between Jacob and Israel is that of a father and a son. Isaiah 29.22 is supposed to establish this new connection, which may suggest to read בֵּית 'house' as בַּת 'daughter'.

The purpose of this mashal is to demonstrate that Jacob will rejoice because he stands in a close relationship with Israel that is about to experience joy. In Parma and Cambridge, as well as in the parallel of Pesiqta Rabbati²⁸⁴, this is tied to the coming of

²⁸⁴ See Appendix.

the redemption. In parallel to 14.6 the redemption is considered to be something positive and both 14.6 and 14.7 associate the redemption with something that will bring שמחה, joy. Both meshalim use the figure of the marital unison for the redemption, suggesting that it is something that is looked forward to because it will bring God and Israel together.

The parallels, this time including the mashal, can be found in Pesiqta Rabbati 41 and Yalkut Psalms 663. The latter displays a combination of the manuscripts of Midrash Tehillim. Pesiqta Rabbati 41 is a close parallel, yet its focus lies on the messianic banquet that Jacob will attend.

7.7 Midrash Tehillim 17.9, A strong man and his son cross a treacherous river

¹קומה ה' קדמה פניו הכריעהו.

ר' פנחס בשם ר' הושעיא אמר ²חמש קימות העמיד דוד להקב"ה בספר תילים, ארבעה כנגד ארבע מלכיות, שראה ברוח הקדש היאך הם עתידים לשעבד את ישראל, והוא מעמיד להקב"ה על כל אחת ואחת, וחמישית שראה מלכותו של גוג ומגוג שהוא בא על ישראל בחזקה, ואמר להקב"ה קומה ה' אל נשא ירך (תהלים י יב), אין לנו ³שליט להזדווג לו אלא אתה, משל לגבור שהוא עובר בנהר ובנו עמו, והוא אווז בידו להעבירו, וכיון שהגיע לחצי הנהר נתגברה השבולת למעלה על ראש בנו, מיד צעק בנו ואמר אבא ארים ידיך דאנא טבע ומית, כך ארבע מלכיות משולים כמים, שנאמר הוי המון (מים) [עמים] רבים [כהמות] (מים) [ימים] [יהמיון וגו'] (ישעיה יז יב), וישראל טובעים בתוכו, שנאמר טבעתי ביון מצולה ואין מעמד [באתי במעמקי מים ושבולת שטפתני] (תהלים סט ג), ⁴ואלמלא הקב"ה עמהם היו כלים ואובדים, שנאמר כי תעבור במים אתך אני (ישעיה מג ב), ⁵כיון שצפה הקב"ה בעמים שהם מתגברין, והחטא גורם, והמלכיות מתגברין כשבולת של נהר לשטוף את ישראל, התחיל צווח ואומר קומה ה' אל נשא ירך, ⁶דלמא טבעין, וכן הוא אומר אל תשטפני שבולת מים (תהלים סט טז), לכך נאמר קומה ה' אל נשא ירך, דלמא טבעין, אמר ליה הקב"ה חייך אני נושא את ידי, שנאמר כי אשא אל שמים ידי ⁷(דברים לב מ).

1. Absent in Vatican 81 and Frankfurt. Florence is blurry. Buber has altered Parma's version, often as found in the other mss. For example adding למעלה (Vatican 76 and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39) and ארים instead of ירים (Cambridge, Vatican 76 and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39).

2. Vatican 76, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris עמידות.

3. Argument of absent ruler is not in Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris. Vatican 76 does not have שליט.

4. Florence, Vatican 76, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris all conclude that אילמלא הקב"ה עמהם לא היו יכולין להנצל, while Parma and Cambridge have ואובדים.

5. Thus Parma and Cambridge, which appears to be a mistake. Florence, Vatican 76, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris read דוד.

6. Parma is the only manuscript that has דלמא twice. In Vatican 76 and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 it says דאן טבעין.

7. Florence, Vatican 76, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris conclude with an additional quote, Isaiah 29.22, [ואל עמים ארים נסי], resembling the Deuteronomy quote. Presumably influencing the alternative reading of ארים earlier in the passage.

Rise, oh Lord, confront him and cause him to bow down in death (Psalm 17.12). Rabbi Pinchas said in the name of Rabbi Hosayah: In the book of Psalms David made God rise five times with the word ‘rise’²⁸⁵. Four of which correspond to the four kingdoms because David saw through the Holy Spirit how they would enslave Israel and he made the Holy One blessed be He stand for every one of them. The fifth rising (is there) because David saw that the kingdom of Gog and Magog will come against Israel with strength and he said to the Holy One blessed be He: *Rise, oh Lord, God, lift up Your hand* (Psalm 10.12). We do not have any other commander to wage war against him, but You.

It may be compared to a strong man (לגבור) who was crossing a river and had his son with him. He held his hand to make him cross the stream, (but) when he reached the middle of the river the current (השבולת) rose (נתגברה) above the son’s head. His son immediately cried and said: ‘Father, father, lift your hand for I am sinking (טבע) and (might) die!’

Likewise the four nations can be compared to water, as has been said: *Woe to a rushing of many peoples, like the rushing of rushing waters* (Isaiah 17.12). Israel sinks (טבע) in its midst, as has been said: *I am sinking (טבע) in deep mire and there is no standing [I have come to deep waters and the current (שבולת) overflows (שטפתני) me]* (Psalm 69.3). If the Holy One blessed be He would not have been with them, they would have ceased to be and perished. As has been said: *When you will pass through the waters, I will be with you* (Isaiah 43.2). When the Holy One blessed be He²⁸⁶ saw that the peoples would grow strong (מתגברין), and that sin caused it, and (when he saw that) the kingdoms would rise up (מתגברים) like the current (כשבולת) of the river in order to engulf (לשטוף) Israel, he began to cry out and said: *Rise, oh Lord, God, lift up Your hand* lest we sink (טבעין)! Thus it says: *Let not the current (שבולת) of waters overwhelm (תשטפני) me!* (Psalm 69.16). Therefore has been said: *Rise oh Lord, God, lift up Your hand*, lest we sink! The Holy One blessed be He said to him: ‘By your life, I will lift up My hand, as has been said: *I lift up My hand to heaven* (Deuteronomy 32.4).

Comment

The darshan has limited himself to the first part of the lemma, קומה יהוה. In ten Psalms²⁸⁷ the imperative קומה is found and six of them have קומה יהוה. In the first book five out of these six occasions can be found. By quoting the teaching on the five Psalm verses in which God is asked to rise two effects are produced. The first effect is that Psalm 17.12 is exchanged for Psalm 10.12, which forms part of these five verses. Its image of God’s rescuing hand is later on used in the mashal. Psalm 10.12 acts as a kind of petichah verse because it is woven into the entire explanation. In the next comment, 17.10, Psalm 10.12 serves as the lemma, which further suggests that it is functioning as a petichah verse.

²⁸⁵ Literally ‘with five risings’.

²⁸⁶ The more logical option is that David witnessed this, see apparatus.

²⁸⁷ Psalms 3.8, 7.7, 9.20, 10.12, 17.13, 35.2, 44.27, 74.22, 82.8 and 132.8.

The teaching of the five risings also creates the setting in which the risings, and Psalm 10.12 in particular, need to be understood. David's call קומה יהוה is restricted to future situations of oppression, i.e. the four kingdoms and the kingdom of Gog and Magog. Although the mashal follows the explanation on the latter kingdom, it does not only elucidate that kingdom, but addresses the total of the five kingdoms.

The mashal sketches a situation in which acute help is needed. The current comes at the moment that the son is most vulnerable; the water has reached its deepest point and he is as far from both banks as is possible. In the nimshal we find a careful web of verbal puns with the mashal. Most of these puns have been borrowed from the scriptural verses quoted in the nimshal and were projected onto the mashal. The plays on מתגברין / עובר have no scriptural base. At the beginning of the nimshal the connection to the four kingdoms is made by means of Isaiah 17.12. Besides making the identification, the context of this verse provides an explanation of what type of sin, in passing mentioned at the end of the derasha, Israel committed. Isaiah 17.10-12 show that Israel has forgotten the God of its salvation and as a result the kingdoms have become like noisy waters. The second proof verse, Psalm 69.3, mentions one of these four kingdoms by name and demonstrates how severely Israel's life is endangered. Only then the darshan introduces God into the nimshal by means of Isaiah 43.2 that should be read in its entirety כי תעבר במים אתך אני ובנהרות לא ישטפוך 'for when you will pass through the waters, I will be with you. The rivers will not engulf you'. The darshan refers to this second half of Isaiah 43.2 when he asserts that Israel would have died without God. The idea of God's protection which is articulated here in relation to the river contributes to the composing of the mashal.

At the end of the passage David acts as Israel's spokesman because he realizes that the peoples and the kingdoms are waxing stronger. The repetitions occur here frequently and they add to the idea that Israel is surrounded from all sides. God replies to David's call for help, which is quite unique for the redemptive meshalim of Midrash Tehillim because the Midrash usually mentions the predicaments and leaves it at that²⁸⁸. The Deuteronomy verse serves a twofold purpose. It has the vertical movement of God's hand, which is to be understood as pulling Israel out of the servitude to the kingdoms. Secondly, lifting up one's hand is a sign of taking an oath and therewith God's answer becomes an oath.

In the very short inner parallel in Midrash Tehillim 3.7, commenting on Psalm 3.8 which is another verse that belongs to this group of five Psalm verses, the same tradents apply four of these verses to the four kingdoms and the fifth to Gog and Magog. In this parallel David's divine inspiration that made him see the movements by the kingdoms and Gog and Magog is not mentioned, nor is there anything on the distress that Israel experiences. Midrash Tehillim 10.6 uses the image of the sea for the troubles experienced during the fourth kingdom. The first external parallel, Pesiqta Rabbati 31, narrows these verses down to the first book of Psalms and quotes 3.8, 7.7, 9.20, 10.12 and 17.12. This is a very close parallel that also has the mashal on the

²⁸⁸ For example 6.5, 10.1 and 10.2.

strong man and his son. The main differences are the long winded speeches by the son and by Israel. Isaiah 8.7 is quoted to show that God sent the nations, symbolized by the waters. The problem of the lemma, Isaiah 49.14, that expressed that Zion has the feeling that God has deserted it is resolved by God's oath at the end of the passage. The second external parallel is Yalkut Psalms 650, which is almost an exact copy of Pesiqta Rabbati 31.

7.8 Midrash Tehillim 20.1, The woman in labour and her mother

למנצח מזמור לדוד, יענך ה' ביום צרה.

זהו שאמר הכתוב יקראני ואענהו עמו אנכי בצרה (תהלים צא טו), אמר הקב"ה בשעה שמגעת צרה לישראל, והם מבקשין אותי, יהיו 'משתתפין כבודי עמהן, ומיד אני עונה אותם, שנאמר יקראני ואענהו, ומה טעם עמו אנכי בצרה, אמר ר' יודן משל לאשה מעוברת שהיתה ²בכעס עם אמה, ובשעת לידתה עלתה אמה למעלה, והיא צווחת למטה, והיתה אמה שומעת קולה מלמעלה, וצווחת גם היא מלמעלה, והיו שכינותיה אומרות לה, מה טיבך שאת צועקת, וכי את יולדת עמה, אמרה להן וכי בתי אינה בצער, ואיך יכולה אני לסבול צעקתה, אלא הריני צווחת עמה, שצרת בתי שלי היא, כך כשחרב בית המקדש ניתן קול בכיה ³ויללה בכל העולם, שנאמר ויקרא אדני ה' צבאות ביום ההוא לבכי ולמספד (ישעיה כב יב), אמרו לפניו מלאכי השרת, וכי יש לפניך דברים הללו, והא כתיב הוד והדר לפניו עוז וחדוה במקומו (דברי הימים א טז כז), אמר להם וכי בתי אינו חרב, ובניי מסורין בקולרין, ואיני מיצר, לא כך כתיב עמו אנכי בצרה (תהלים צא טו), וכתיב ועתה מה לי פה [וגוי כל היום שמי מנואץ] (ישעיה נב ה).

1. Cambridge has incorrect reading משתפין.
2. Florence, Vatican 76 and Frankurt do not mention this. Instead they let the mother mention the argument. Cambridge has both the mentioning of the argument and the mother's words: כי בתי בצער לידה ואני יכולה לסבל צעקתה אף על פי שהכעיסה אתי איני יכולה לסבל צעקתה אליו הריני צווחת עמה שצרת בתי שלי היא. *For my daughter is in birth pain, I cannot bear to hear her cry even though she has made me angry I cannot bear her cry to him (to me) behold I am shouting with her for the distress of my daughter is mine.*
3. Corrected by Buber, Parma has ולילה.
4. Except for Parma and Cambridge, all mss have רבונו של עולם.
5. Except for Parma and Cambridge, all mss have ואני מצער ומיצר.
6. Except for Parma and Cambridge, all mss have לא (כך) כתבתי להם.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm by David. The Lord will answer you in the day of trouble (Psalm 20.1,2). This is to be read in the light of: (when) he will call Me and I will answer him, I will be with him in trouble (Psalm 91.15). The Holy One blessed be He said: The moment trouble comes to Israel and they are seeking Me, let them join My Glory to them and I will answer them immediately, as has been said: (when) He will call Me and I will answer him.

And what is the reason of (when) *He will call Me and I will answer him* ? Rabbi Judan said: It may be compared to a pregnant woman who was angry with her mother. The moment of giving birth the mother went upstairs and (the daughter) was crying out below and her mother was hearing her voice and she too was crying out above. The neighbours were saying to her: 'What kind of character are you that you are screaming?

Are you giving birth with her?' She said to them: 'Is not my daughter in pain? How could I hear her scream? But behold, I am crying out with her, my daughter's pain is mine (too).'

Likewise when the Temple was destroyed and the sound of crying and lamentation was produced in the whole world, as has been said: *And that day the Lord of hosts called to weeping and to mourning* (Isaiah 22.12). The ministering angels said to Him: 'Can these things be in Your presence? Is it not written: *Majesty and honour are in His presence and strength and joy are in His place?* (I Chronicles 16.27)' He said to them: 'Has not my Temple been destroyed and aren't My children seized in chains? And would I not be in pain? Has it not been written: *I will be with him in pain?* And it has been written: *And now what do I do here? ... My name is blasphemed all day* (Isaiah 52.5).

Comment

The darshan of this passage sets out to explore the first half of the second verse of Psalm 20. He therewith limits himself to the circumstances of the 'day of trouble', which here, like in other cases in Midrash Tehillim such as 20.4, involve events that require redemption. Psalm 91.15 has not only been selected because of its verbal puns²⁸⁹, but also because the Psalm introduces more information regarding God's redeeming qualities. In addition to this, the verse has a remarkable order since it first speaks of calling, then of answering and only in a later stage it speaks of being with the person that called. The solution to this is partly found in the dictum by God, who does not only identify the two main persons as Israel and Himself, but who also describes the calling as seeking God and the answering as 'let them join my Glory to them'. The latter is a rather curious expression, which seems to suggest that Israel should partner with God's Shechinah. It also implies that the Shechinah and Israel are currently not 'connected' and in the mashal is explained in what way the last part of Psalm 91.15 'I will be with him in trouble' is taking place.

The tradent for the mashal is probably the fourth generation Palestinian Amora Rabbi Judan. In the mashal proper three dramatis personae are presented; the pregnant woman, her mother and the neighbours. The relationship between daughter and mother is not going well and a recent argument, about which nothing is revealed, has resulted in a parting of ways. The manuscripts are divided when it comes to identifying the one who has initiated the break up. Some, such as Parma and Vatican 81, say that the daughter was angry with her mother, while others like Cambridge and Florence have the mother explain to the neighbours that it was the daughter that made her angry. Be it as it is, the mother tries to remain close to her suffering daughter and while she has no visual contact, she can still hear what is going on and she suffers with her daughter. The dialogue with the neighbours make it clear that the mother's empathy for her daughter causes her to cry as well.

²⁸⁹ צרה and ענה.

In the nimshal the theologically rather unconventional pair of a daughter and her mother is applied to Israel and God. Nothing is said about what led to a parting of ways and it is presented as a given. The reference to the Destruction of the Temple places it in 70 CE or later. The only aspect that is taken from the first half of the mashal, is that of crying. Isaiah 22.12, which has some verbal tallies to the beginning of the nimshal, describes how God summons Himself to start crying and mourning, to which the angels respond by pointing out that this action does not conform to His divine qualities. The angels' proof comes from a hymn by David for the first day the Ark was back in Jerusalem, this fortifies the connection to the Temple and Jerusalem, that is also taken up in God's reply. It is the Temple that is mentioned as God's first concern and His second concern are His sons who endure an exile. Both concerns result in God's distress, which is then proven by repeating Psalm 91.15. The Temple is being referred to as *ביתי*, while *בית המקדש* might have been used. Israel might have been called *בתי*, which is in perfect harmony with the mashal, but instead is called *בניי*. The contrast with the mashal is evident; there the mother is moved by what is happening to her daughter and this is what makes her a 'co-sufferer'. God's suffering is substantially different because it is not just empathy, but a reaction to events that effected Him deeply. The idea of God having His own reasons for being distressed is enforced by the quote from Isaiah 52; for until the present day, God's name is blasphemed.

As said at the beginning of this comment, the darshan chose to restrict himself to the concept of 'day of trouble'. While the main message of the mashal without any doubt is the idea that God is with Israel in trouble because He too is distressed by what has taken place, the expected redemption lingers in the background. One would expect that the pain the daughter experiences is a symbol of the birthpangs of the Messiah, *חבלי המשיח*, i.e. the terrible events that have to take place before the redemption will come. The locus classicus is Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 98B where different scenarios for the time of travail are sketched out. The term as such does not appear in Midrash Tehillim and in the nimshal of 20.1 it is not touched upon at all. A superficial glance at the nimshal might even give one the impression that the birth pain is applied to the Destruction of the Second Temple.

The redemption is not totally absent and can be found in some of the verses that are used in the passage. First there is Psalm 20.2 that is followed by the wish 'may the Name of the God of Jacob set you on high, May He send your help from the Temple, from Zion your support'. Secondly there is Psalm 91.15 that contains God's promise to rescue and honour Israel. The third verse where in its context an echo of redemption is present is Isaiah 52.7 where peace and salvation is announced. This, taken together with the notion of God sympathizing with Israel and His suffering, all the more points to the fact that redemption can be near.

Yalkut Psalms 679 is the only parallel to this mashal and it shows again a mixture of the manuscripts of Midrash Tehillim.

7.9 Midrash Tehillim 20.4, Father and son travel to the capital Consolation for labouring woman

דבר אחר יענך ה' ביום צרה.

משל לאב ובן שהיו מהלכין בדרך, ונתייגע הבן, ואמר לאב היכן היא המדינה, אמר לו בני סימן זה יהא בידך, אם ראית בית הקברות לפניך, הרי היא המדינה קרובה לך, כך אמר להם הקב"ה לישראל, אם ראיתם את הצרות¹ שתכפו אתכם, באותה שעה אתם נגאלין, שנאמר יענך ה' ביום צרה ישגבך שם אלהי יעקב, אברהם ויצחק אין כתיב כאן, אלא יעקב, ולמה, אמר ר' שמעון בן לקיש משל לאשה עוברה שהיא מקשה לילד, ואומרים לה לית אן יודעין מה נאמר לך, אלא מאן דעני לאמך בעידן קושייתה, הוא יעני יתך בעידן קשיותך, כך כתיב ביעקב (האל) [לאל] העונה אותי ביום צרתי (בראשית לה ג),² אמר להם דוד לישראל מי שענה בעת צרתי הוא יענה אתכם, הוי יענך ה' ביום צרה ישגבך שם אלהי יעקב.

1. Parma and Cambridge use תכף 'to seize', the other mss have כסה 'to cover'.

2. Simeon ben Laqish in Parma, Cambridge, Florence and Paris. Alternative reading is Resh Laqish, as found in the other mss and in the parallel Deuteronomy Rabbah (W) 2.11.

3. Florence, Vatican 81, Paris and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris have additional text (here acc. to the latter)

בא וראה שכח גדול היה לו ליעקב שני בבטן עקב את אחיו בבטן אמו היה כחו עקב את אחיו עשו וכן ויגל את האבן וגוי' מה שלא יוכלו כמה אנשים וכן וישר אל מלאך ויוכל ומחנה אחד הרג כמה רבבות במנחה סנחריב שני ויצא מלאך יי וגוי' העונה אותי ביום צרתי הוא יענה אתכם הוי יענך יי ביום צרה

Come and see what great power Jacob had, as has been said: in the womb he attacked his brother (Hosea 12.4). It was his strength that attacked his brother Esau in the womb of his mother. And thus: he rolled the stone away etc (Genesis 29.10). (This was something) what many men could not do. And thus: he fought the angel and prevailed (Hosea 12.5). He killed one camp and many myriads in Sennacherib's camp, as has been said: and the angel of the Lord went out etc. (2 Kings 19.35). He answered me in the day of my trouble (Genesis 35.3). He will answer you in the day of trouble (Psalm 20.2).

Another explanation of *The Lord will answer you in the day of trouble* (Psalm 20.2). It may be compared to a father and a son who were travelling on a road. The son became tired and said to the father: 'Where is the capital?' He said to him: 'My son, this sign will be in your hand: When you see a cemetery in front of you, behold the capital is close to you!' Likewise said the Holy One blessed be He to Israel: 'When you will see troubles which seize you, that moment you will be redeemed.' As has been said: *The Lord will answer you in the day of trouble and may the name of the God of Jacob exalt you* (Psalm 20.2).

'Abraham and Isaac' has not been written here, but 'Jacob'. Why? Rabbi Simeon ben Laqish said: It may be compared to a pregnant woman who experienced difficult labour. People said to her: 'We do not know what we should say to you, but this: May He who answered your mother in the time of her labour, also answer you in the time of your labour. Likewise has been written about Jacob: *God answered me in the day of my trouble* (Genesis 35.3). David said to Israel: May He who answered me in the time of my trouble, also answer you. Hence: *the Lord will answer you in the day of trouble and may the name of the God of Jacob exalt you* (Psalm 20.2).

Comment

The darshan plays on the two possibilities of translating the lemma. It may be 'may the Lord answer you' and 'may the name of the God of Jacob exalt you', or it can be more affirmative 'the Lord will answer you' and 'the name of the God of Jacob will exalt you'. In the first mashal the more affirmative meaning is present. The son of the first mashal requires a sign, a reassurance, that he can complete the journey because he knows that it will not take long before he reaches the capital. Two reasons why the darshan uses the cemetery as a symbol can be suggested. First of all it is presumably the first sign of civilisation, be it one that has negative associations such as death and impurity. Secondly it forms a wordplay on its nearness (קרובה and בית הקברות). The nimshal does not have its protasis, which in this case may be the waiting for the redemption, although it is not that obvious what one should think of. Quite remarkably, when compared with the second mashal and most of the other redemptive meshalim in Midrash Tehillim²⁹⁰, God provides Israel with a sign that indicates that Israel's redemption will be near. It is formulated in such a way that the redemption will take place the moment the sign has been witnessed, which is different in the mashal proper. The troubles (הצרות) that will function as a sign form a direct reference to the lemma (ביום צרה). That the troubles Israel may have experienced in the period before the sign are not 'ordinary' can be deduced from the fact that they are called צרות שתכפו. What this, or its alternative צרות שיכסו, means is not evident. The repetition of the lemma not only restates the promise, it also paves the way for the comment on the second half of the verse. The element that is picked up here is that Jacob is mentioned. The same reading strategy אין כתיב כאן אלא as in 14.7 is used to single out Jacob at the expense of Abraham and Isaac. There may be a second reason why Jacob is contrasted with the other two patriarchs and this is linked to the wording of the second mashal. Like in the mashal of 20.1 Israel is symbolized by a pregnant woman that is in labour. Her situation is illustrated by a verbal tally on מקשה לילד and קושיותך which may in fact have been influenced by Genesis 35 that appears in the nimshal. In Genesis 35 Rachel gives birth to her second son Benjamin, a difficult delivery that even results in her death. It is described as ויהי בהקשתה בלדתה, and the same verse speaks of an anonymous midwife that tries to comfort her. Also in the mashal anonymous bystanders try to console the suffering woman. Their words remind us of Mishnah Ta'anit 2.4 where after seven benedictions²⁹¹ the following is said: מי שענה את ... הוא 'may He who answered ...- name and situation-...answer you and may He hear the voice of your crying this day'. The people who have been answered by God are Abraham, Israel at the Sea, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, Jonah and David and Solomon who are mentioned as a pair. Jacob is not listed here, but Genesis 35.3 demonstrates that God also answered him. The similarity of this verse with the lemma is striking for all the elements are present. The difference between the mashal and the nimshal is that not the bystanders, but the figure of the mother, here as Jacob and David, tells her story. In David's case the lemma is

²⁹⁰ With exception of 17.9.

²⁹¹ The seventh benediction of the Eighteen Benedictions, followed by six additional benedictions that are recited during seven days of fasting for rain.

quoted to testify that David experienced help from God and it also acts as an encouragement for Israel. This second mashal ends with the encouragement and does not have a divine counter-part and lacks reassurance from God.

There are two parallels to the second mashal, one in Deuteronomy Rabbah (Wilna) 2.11, and one in Yalkut Psalms 680. The latter shows almost no differences with what is found in Midrash Tehillim. Deuteronomy Rabbah is a slightly different case since its lemma is Psalm 20.1, but its destination is Deuteronomy 4.7. The implication is that in the nimshal Moses is mentioned as third figure and he has the role of intercessor for Israel.

7.10 Midrash Tehillim 22.12, The gleaning princess

יפה כלבנה (שיר השירים ו י).

למה נמשלו ישראל ללבנה, מה לבנה שולטת ביום ובלילה, כך ישראל שולטין בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא, יכול יהיו חסירין כלבנה הזו שהיא חסרה בכל חודש, תלמוד לומר 'ברה כחמה (שיר השירים ו י), מה חמה שלימה, אף ישראל שלימין במצות. איומה כנדגלות (שיר השירים ו י). ²ר' אליעזר ור' יהושע, ר' אליעזר אומר] כמלאכי השרת העומדים דגלים דגלים, [ור' יהושע] אומר כיציאתן ממצרים שעמדו דגלים דגלים. תני ר' חייא משל לבת מלכים שהיתה מלקטת ³בשפלין, והיה המלך עובר והכירה שהיא 'בתו, אהבה ונטלה והושיבה בקרונין, והיו חברותיה תמיהות עליה ואומרות, אתמול היית מלקטת בשפלין, והיום את יושבת בקרונין אצל המלך, אומרת להם כשם שאתם תמיהות עלי, כך אני תמיהה על עצמי, כך כשהיו ישראל משועבדין במצרים 'בחומר ובלבנים, היו מאוסין בעיניהם של מצרים, וכשנגאלו ונעשו בני חורין, ופחות וסגנים על כל באי עולם, והיו תמיהים, והיו ישראל אומרים להם, כשם שאתם תמיהים עלינו, כך אנו תמיהים על עצמנו, הדא הוא דכתיב לא ידעתי נפשי שמתני מרכבות עמי נדיב (שיר השירים ו יב).

1. Florence, Vatican 76 and Frankfurt argue that the negative aspects of the moon do not apply to the sun.
2. Cambridge mentions Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua. Parma knows of two Rabbis but fails to record their names. Vatican 76, Frankfurt and Paris have Rabbi Joshua.
3. Thus Parma, Cambridge and Frankfurt. The other manuscripts have שבלים
4. Florence, Vatican 81, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris. Parma, Vatican 76 and Cambridge have בתו של מלך,
5. Florence, Vatican 76 and 81, Frankfurt and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 have טיט and לבנים
6. Florence, Vatican 76 and 81, Frankfurt, College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris do not support the word פחות

Beautiful like the moon (Song of Songs 6.10). Why is Israel compared to the moon? (Because) like the moon rules by day and by night, thus Israel will rule in this world and in the world to come.

It is possible (to say) that Israel would be less, like this moon that wanes every month, (but) Scripture says: *Bright as the sun* (idem). Like the sun is full, thus Israel will be full of meritorious deeds.

Terrible as bannered hosts (idem) [Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua (disagreed). Rabbi Eliezer said:] Like the ministering angels stand (arranged) in many divisions. [Rabbi

Joshua] said: Like those who went out of Egypt when they stood (arranged) in many divisions. Rabbi Chiyya taught: It may be compared to a princess who was gleaning among the ears and the king passed by and he recognized her as his daughter. He loved her (again) and took her up and made her sit in his coaches. Her friends were astonished about her and said: 'Yesterday you were gleaning among the ears and today you sit in coaches next to the king.' She said to them: 'Just like you are astonished about me, so am I astonished about myself.'

Likewise (was it with) Israel (when they) were enslaved in Egypt with clay and stones and they were despised in the eyes of the Egyptians. When they were redeemed and made free men and were governors and chiefs over all that walks on earth the Egyptians were astonished and Israel said to them: 'Just like you are astonished about us, so are we astonished about ourselves'. This is what has been said: *I did not know (myself), You have placed my soul on chariots of my princely people* (Song of Songs 6.12).

Comment

The lemma is a verse that was used in Midrash Tehillim 22.11 to illustrate the Exodus from Egypt. In that passage the first part of Song of Songs 6.10 was submitted to further exploration and in the present passage the remainder of the verse is commented on. In the lemma both the moon and the sun appear in a praise of Israel. This may seem a little overdone, but the Midrash explains that the moon and the sun complement each other so that none of the downsides of these heavenly bodies applies to Israel. The last part of the lemma, *איומה כנדגלות*, is the subject of a disagreement between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua, although their names do not occur in all the manuscripts. It is not clear what the participle feminine plural *כנדגלות* refers to, one would have expected a noun such as *צבאות* 'hosts' to accompany it and in the critical apparatus of the BHS it is suggested that its correct place is in verse 5. Both Rabbis do not deal with this issue but simply read *דגלים* instead which they apply respectively to the angels and to Israel. It is likely that both Rabbis are referring to the Exodus, as is done in Exodus Rabbah (Wilna) 15.6, where the same issue is explained as:

איומה כנדגלות אין דגלים אלא צבאות שנאמר (במדבר ב ד) דגל מחנה וצבאו ופקודיהם, וכן דגלי השמים והמלאכים ודגלי הארץ ישראל, צבאות השמים מלאכים שנאמר (דברי הימים ב יח) וכל צבא השמים עומדים וגו', צבאות הארץ ישראל שנאמר (שמות יב מא) יצאו כל צבאות ה' מארץ מצרים,

A second argument for positioning these divisions in Egypt is the fact that the mashal illustrates the general setting of the Exodus. The mashal's main purpose is to clarify *לא ידעתי נפשי שמתני מרכבות עמי נדיב*, another verse from the Song of Songs, namely 6.12, and several elements of the mashal can be traced back to the verse, which will be discussed below. By means of the mashal is conveyed that, from Israel's point of view, the redemption from Egypt took place in an instant and that it was performed by its loving God. The quick change in Israel's situation in connection with the servitude to Egypt is also addressed in Midrash Tehillim 1.20 and 107.4.

The choice for two royal main characters is certainly inspired by the word עמינדיב in Songs of Songs 6.12 which is read as עמי נדיב 'my princely people', thus solving the question what it means. It might for example have also been understood as the name Amminadib. Also the idea that everything takes place unexpectedly and speedily is congruous with the verse, since it corresponds to לא ידעתי 'I did not know'. Song of Songs 6.12 can also explain why the king is travelling in coaches, קרונין, i.e. a plural just like מרכבות. Now the Latin loanword carrus, קרון, was quite accepted, and it is for example used in a regulation concerning the coaches of the house of Rabbi with respect to the Sabbath²⁹². It was a regular means of transport and there seems to be no special reason why this loanword has been employed.

A minor difference is found in the description of the ears that the princess had to glean in order to make a living. Some manuscripts use the word שפלים, while others have the word שבלים. While the latter may be related to the word שיבולת 'ear', the first can be associated with the verb שפל 'to be low' which further demonstrates how far the princess was away from her former position. In the mashal the words אהבה ונטלה are found, which are somewhat problematic since one would expect something like שוב 'again' or עוד 'still'. In the manuscripts some of this confusion surfaces when the manuscripts write that the king recognized his own daughter as בת של מלך. In the parallel of Songs Rabbah (Wilna) 6.12 there is no such confusion because the king is reported to שלח אוהבו, i.e. the king sent his friend. This implies that another party is involved in the redemption, which is something that is not acceptable for the meshalim in Midrash Tehillim.

Song of Songs Rabbah (Wilna only) contains two parallels, one in 6.10 and one in 6.12. Passage 6.10 shows the complementarity of the sun and the moon, while in Midrash Tehillim just the basic requirements for this idea are given²⁹³. In 6.12 a parallel to the mashal is present. It seems that the two texts have a shared tradition, as became apparent above when the word אהבה was treated. The third parallel, Yalkut Song of Songs 992 has the most in common with Midrash Tehillim, although there are two deviations in the mashal.

7.11 Midrash Tehillim 105.11, The corpulent man and the donkey

¹שמח מצרים בצאתם.

אמר ר' ברכיה משל לבעל בשר שרוכב על החמור חמרא מסכיה אימת יחות ל' מיניה, ואיהו מסכיה אימת ניחות מן חמרא, כיון דנחית ל' חדי גברא וחדי חמרא,² ולית אנא ידע מאן חדי טפי, הוי אומר חמרא חדי טפי, כך ישראל במצרים, היו המכות באות על המצריים,³ והיו מקוים המצריים אימתי יצאו ישראל, וישראל מקוים אימתי יגאלם הקב"ה, כיון שיצאו ונגאלו,⁴ היו אלו

²⁹² Talmud Bavli Sabbath 112a.

²⁹³ Florence, Vatican 76 and Frankfurt argue that the negative aspects of the moon do not apply to the sun.

שמחים ואלו שמחים, ⁵ואין אנו יודעין מי שמח ביותר, עד שבא דוד ואמר שמח מצרים בצאתם, אנו יודעים שמצרים שמחו ביותר.

1. See Trinity College Cambridge F18.39, see under 100 (erroneous numbering).
2. The other mss seem to have some problems with the Aramaic, for example when discussing who is the happiest and combinations as לית אנה ידעין are given.
3. Added by Buber; it is not present in Parma and Cambridge.
4. Florence, Vatican 81, Frankfurt and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 all four describe the Egyptians and Israelites as התחילו אילו ואילו שמחין and they concur on a number of smaller instances.
5. The transition to the Psalm verse is also the same in Parma and Cambridge עד שבא דוד ואמר. The other mss have readings like ואין אנו יודעים מי שמח יותר וממה שאמר דוד.

Egypt was glad when they went (Psalm 105.38). Rabbi Berechiah said: It is comparable to a corpulent man who was riding on a donkey. The donkey was hoping 'When will he get off me?' and the man was hoping 'When will I get off the donkey?' When he got off, the man was glad and the donkey was glad. I do not know who was more glad. You may say the donkey was more glad.

Likewise (it was when) Israel was in Egypt. The plagues came upon the Egyptians and the Egyptians were hoping (for the moment) when Israel would go out and Israel was waiting (for the moment) when the Holy One blessed be He would redeem them. When they went out and were redeemed, these were glad and those were glad. I did not know who was more glad, until David came and said: '*Egypt was glad when they went*' and (now) we know that Egypt was more glad.

Comment

Rabbi Berechiah has singled out one element of Psalm 105.8 that may seem a little out of place; would it not have made more sense if the anonymous Psalmist would have written that Israel was glad when they left Egypt? Israel was the one that was subjected to slavery and its male infants were in great danger, not Egypt, so why would the Psalmist write that the oppressor, Egypt, was glad? This question is the case for the mashal, which does an excellent job in wrong-footing the reader by carefully picking the characters. The conclusion that the donkey was the most glad is drawn by Rabbi Berechiah. In the nimshal the reader realizes that the donkey does not represent Israel, but Egypt! There is no obvious reason why a donkey represents Egypt, but perhaps the fact that the Egyptian god Seth is sometimes associated with a donkey plays a role.

As is known from the book of Exodus, Israel was not able to leave Egypt all by itself and a number of plagues, to which the nimshal alludes, were required to make the redemption take place. The nimshal stresses, like is done on many occasions in Midrash Tehillim, that it is God who redeemed Israel. At the end of the passage Rabbi Berechiah appears as interpreter and he quotes David's Psalm verse to elucidate his point that Egypt was the most glad when Israel was redeemed. By doing so David is presented as the author of the Psalm, who is in fact anonymous, and this reinforces David's role.

In many meshalim the nimshal is built around Scriptural verses that often push the interpretation into a certain direction. In this particular case the exegesis of the lemma is the passage's main priority and these verses can be left out.

There is one internal parallel to this mashal, which can be found in 114.1 where it is given in Hebrew. The mashal in 114.1 is not complete and it seems that the crux was either not understood or radically changed. In Yalkut Psalms 863 a mixture of the manuscripts of Midrash Tehillim is presented.

7.12 Midrash Tehillim 118.13, The king who outsmarts thieves

¹דבר אחר כל גוים סבבוני.

שהוא עתיד לכוּס כל האומות ולהעלותם לירושלים, וישראל מתייראין באותה שעה, והקב"ה אומר להם אל תיראו, ²שנאמר אל תיראי תולעת יעקב (ישעיה מא יד), וכל הפרשה והלא פרוכים, לכך נאמר בשם ה' כי אמילם. סבוני גם סבבוני. שהוא עתיד לתפוש שבטו של יהודה ולאסור אותו, וכסבורים למסור כל אחד ואחד ³לשונאים שלו, ויאמרו יבואו אחינו וישלטו בנו, ואל ישלטו בנו שונאינו, שנאמר ואמרו אלופי יהודה בלבם (זכריה יב ה), והקב"ה עושה להם נסים ומפיל שונאיהן לפניהם, שנאמר ביום ההוא אשים את אלופי יהודה וגוי (זכריה יב ו), והלא פרוכים, לכך נאמר כי אמילם. סבוני כדבורים. מה הדבורה הזו מכנסת ⁴דבש לבעליה, כך עתיד הקב"ה ליכנס כל אומות העולם ולהעלותם לירושלים, שנאמר הנה יום בא לה' וחולק שללך בקרבך (זכריה יד א) יכול שיש בהם ממש, ת"ל דועכו כאש קוצים, משל למלך שנכנסו עליו גנבים, והיה המלך פקח, אמר המלך אם אני עומד עליהם מיד הם אומרים ⁵מה מצאת בידינו במחתרת, אלא יודע אני שהן עתידין לבא שלשה פעמים, ואני עומד עליהם והורגן, כך המלך זה הקב"ה, הגנבים אלו האומות, ⁶שנאמר ואספתי [את] כל הגוים אל ירושלים למלחמה (זכריה יד ב), המחתרת זה העיר ירושלים, שנאמר ונלכדה העיר ונשסו הבתים (זכריה יד ב), זה הביזה, והנשים תשכבנה (זכריה יד ב) אלו ⁷העריות, ויצא חצי העיר בגולה (זכריה יד ב), זו השביה, והקב"ה יוצא ונלחם עמהם, שנאמר ויצא ה' ונלחם בגוים ההם (זכריה יד ג), והקב"ה משלח בהם מגפה, שנאמר וזאת תהיה המגפה אשר יגוף ה' את כל העמים (זכריה יד יב), וכל הפרשה ⁸והלא פרוכים, לכך נאמר כי אמילם.

1. Absent in Vatican 81. Trinity College Cambridge F18.39, see under 112.

2. Florence quotes Zechariah 8.13 before Isaiah 41.14. This verse promises that Israel's situation which is comparable to a curse, will be turned into a blessing. At the end of this verse it says אלתיראו, which is similar to Isaiah 41.14.

3. Parma's contains spelling errors, for example לשונאים for לשנים and משלו instead of שלו.

4. Cambridge and Parma both mention that the bee brings blossoms (ניציניא) and that it makes honey.

5. Cambridge concurs with the other mss on two points. Here it reads מה מצא and it calls Jerusalem העיר.

6. Florence, Vatican 76 and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 do not use Zechariah 14.2 for the identification of the thieves; the quote appears later in the nimshal.

7. Florence, Vatican 76 and Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 have השיות, Frankfurt and Paris read גילוי ערות.

8. This structuring element is only partially present in Vatican 76, Frankfurt, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris.

Another explanation of: *All the nations have surrounded me* (Psalm 118.10). For He will gather all the peoples and make them go up to Jerusalem and in that hour Israel

will be afraid. The Holy One blessed be He will say to them ‘Do not fear’, as has been said: *Do not fear, oh worm Jacob* (Isaiah 41.4) and the whole unit ...and will they not be crushed? Therefore has been said: *For I will crush them in the name of the Lord* (Psalm 118.10).

They surrounded me, yes, they surrounded me about (Psalm 118.11). For He will seize the tribe of Judah and bind it and they will think to hand everyone to his haters. They²⁹⁴ will say: ‘Oh that our brothers would come and rule over us. Do not let the son(s) of our haters rule over us.’ As has been said: *The chiefs of Judah will say in their hearts* (Zechariah 12.5). The Holy One blessed be He will perform miracles for them and He will make their haters fall before them, as has been said: *On that day I will put the chiefs of Judah (as a firepot among the trees and a torch of fire in a sheaf)* (Zechariah 12.6). And will they not be crushed? Therefore has been said: *For I will crush them* (Psalm 118.10,11,12).

They surrounded me like bees (Psalm 118.12) Like this bee gathers honey for her masters, thus the Holy One blessed be He will gather all peoples of the world and make them go up to Jerusalem. As has been said: *Behold, a day will come for the Lord, that your spoil will be divided in your midst* (Zechariah 14.1). It is possible (to say) that there is substance in them, but Scripture says: *they were extinguished like a fire of thorns* (Psalm 118.12).

It may be compared to a king to (whose house) thieves came. The king was smart and said: ‘If I will stand (up) against them (now), they will immediately say ‘What have you found in our hand from the place we broke into?’ But I know that they will come three times and I will stand (up) against them and I will kill them (the third time).

Likewise, the king is the Holy One blessed be He, and the thieves, those are the nations, as has been said: *I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem, to war* (Zechariah 14.2). The place they break into, that is the city of Jerusalem, as has been said: *the city will be taken and the houses will be plundered* (Zechariah 14.2) (For) the spoil. *And the women will be made to lie down* (Zechariah 14.2). These are the genitals (which will be exposed). *And half of the city will go out in exile* (Zechariah 14.2). That is captivity. The Holy One blessed be He will go out and wage war against them, as has been said: *The Lord will go out and wage war against these nations* (Zechariah 14.3). The Lord will send a plague against them, as has been said: *This will be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the peoples* (Zechariah 14.12) and the whole passage. Therefore has been said: *I will crush them* (Psalm 118.10,11,12).

Comment

In order to understand the darshan’s interest in the lemma, one should read verses 10-12 of Psalm 118 together. All three verses end with **כי אמילם** and thus the number three that is imposed as a structure unto the passage is explained. The expression itself is obscure, which is also reflected by note 10c of the critical apparatus of the BHS that

²⁹⁴ The tribe of Judah.

lists some alternatives. The darshan rephrases **כי אמילם** as the rhetorical question **והלא פרוכים**. This suggests that he has derived **אמילם** from the root **מלל**, which is used for describing the crushing of grain, olives and other harvested goods. The three rhetorical questions are connected to three attacks by the nations that are directed against Jerusalem and tribe of Judah.

The main reading strategy of this passage is that it demonstrates the idea of the three attacks by means of Psalm 118.10-12 and it fills in the details by using verses from Zechariah 12 and 14 and Psalm 118. The two Zechariah chapters speak of hostile movements towards Jerusalem, which culminate in a celebration of the festivals in Jerusalem. The current derasha certainly seeks to make a different statement: the attacks will have to be endured and God will show that the people have not suffered in vain because He will crush their attackers.

At the beginning of the passage one finds an encouragement for the siege Israel has to face. It comes from Isaiah 41.14 which introduces God as the Redeemer since the entire verse reads **אל תיראי תולעת יעקב מתי ישראל אני עזרתך נאם יהוה וגאלך קדוש ישראל**. This may be the reason why no attention is paid to the exegetical problem of **בשם יהוה כי אמילם** 'for I will crush them in the name of the Lord' that implies that a person other than the Lord will be executing the crushing. The words from Isaiah 41 are linked to the crushing theme because in this chapter is written about a threshing of the enemies.

The expression **וכל הפרשה** is not often found in the Rabbinic corpus²⁹⁵. In Midrash Tehillim it is used in 22.5, 118.12 and 118.13. These occasions seem to refer to a scriptural unit.

The second attack, in line with Zechariah 12, is on Judah. The quoted verses speak of despair, to which God will put an end. The imagery of the harvest is also present in Zechariah 12.6 and it is applied to ending the rule of Judah's haters. The miracles that will be performed refer to the small number of Judah's chiefs who will destroy all the peoples. The third and final attack, directed against Jerusalem, has a slightly different character because spoil is involved. While one might think that the nations have more success than during their two earlier attacks, it stressed that also this attack will be put to an end. In this case the image of the burning of thorns, the worthless remnant after the harvest, is used.

The mashal's main purpose is to demonstrate that the attacks do not take place without reason and that the intervention is delayed for a purpose. The smart king knows that he has to catch the thieves red-handed or else they will be able to go unpunished. In the nimshal a deictic style is employed, both in identifying the main characters and in systematic application of verses from Zechariah 14. Like the figure of the king²⁹⁶, God

²⁹⁵ Other instances are Tanchuma (W) פנחס 3.3, Midrash Samuel 10.4, Midrash Aggadah ויקרא 16. Medieval commentators as Rashi and Radak also use this expression.

²⁹⁶ A king is a well-known symbol for God and in this case it also fits in with Zechariah 14 that speaks of God's kingship over the world.

has to allow the nations to execute their plans. God's role in the events is ambiguous because He is also the One who gathers the nations in the first place. Each element of Zechariah 14.2 is applied to an act of violation and it is ended when the darshan reaches the exiling of the inhabitants of Jerusalem that can be understood as taking something 'from the place they broke into'. The plague is directly derived from Zechariah 14 and here the agricultural metaphors are abandoned. At the end of the nimshal the question והלא פרוכים appears for the third time and herewith the series of the three crushings is completed. Unlike some of the other meshalim this mashal does not call for redemption from the dire situation of the present, but displays a more prophetic approach. It is not applied to the four kingdoms and Gog and Magog²⁹⁷ and it is unclear which attacks the darshan had in mind.

In Midrash Hallel²⁹⁸ there is a parallel to the mashal, which is very close to Midrash Tehillim. At the end there is an additional quote from Isaiah 66.19 which makes the fate of the nations milder because God's glory will be declared among them. Perhaps there is a shared tradition.

²⁹⁷ As is done in 17.9

²⁹⁸ To be found on page 108 of Jellinek, A, *Bet-ha-Midrasch: Sammlung kleiner Midraschim*, Jerusalem, reprint of 1967.

8 Redemption in Midrash Tehillim

8.1 Redemptions of the past

In 6.5.4 it was argued that Midrash Tehillim's presentation of the redemptions of the past is such that they share the theological belief that God is Israel's only Redeemer. In order to get this message across, the Biblical narratives were slightly altered. Moses, and to a lesser extent his brother Aaron, played a role in the book of Exodus, but in Midrash Tehillim their efforts are limited. The mythic description of Psalm 68 provided the darshan with the possibility to discuss God's supernatural powers, thus further building God's unique position as redeemer. Also the Babylonian exile had its heroic figures, but they do not appear in Midrash Tehillim. Daniel and his three friends are not considered to be martyrs, but as living evidence that faith in God will be rewarded with redemption. Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah who all had their share in the return to Erets Israel and in the rebuilding of the people of Israel are not mentioned at all. The book of Esther needed a different modification since God's name is not present in any of its chapters. The solution is that Esther addresses God in prayer and in complaint. For Midrash Tehillim God is no longer invisible during the Persian period and He is portrayed as a miracle-worker who saves Esther's life. An exception was made for the third kingdom, that of the Greeks, that is not part of the Biblical canon. Like Targum Song of Songs the Hasmoneans are spoken of with awe.

The Exodus and the stories about Esther are confined to blocks of comments, the other redemptions are not presented in a cluster, but are scattered throughout the Midrash. There are many parallels to these past redemptions, in particular for the passages on the Exodus for which Exodus Rabbah (Wilna) offered quite a few parallels. For the other redemptions there are several parallels, none of which occur frequently.

8.2 Redemption in the Meshalim of Midrash Tehillim

For the former redemptions one characteristic of God was amplified, but this strategy is not applied to the redemption from the fourth kingdom. It is my firm belief that the redemptive meshalim fit in the reading strategy that was used for the redemptions of the past in the sense that God is presented as the sole Redeemer. Yet, different aspects are highlighted by the meshalim. The redemptive meshalim addressed two redemptions: the Exodus and the future redemption.

8.2.1 The Exodus

The two meshalim on the Exodus²⁹⁹ do not have the *Leitmotive* that appear in the other redemptive meshalim. When compared to the clash of forces as described in the comments on Psalm 68, the meshalim are quite peaceful. In 22.12 the mashal illustrates the swift change in the fate of the Israelites, without touching upon the peril that Israel encountered when leaving Egypt. Next to the speed wherewith everything

²⁹⁹ 22.12 and 105.11 with its inner parallel in 114.1.

happened the mashal highlights the idea that Israel was returned to its former, princely state. Also the mashal on the corpulent man does not address the danger Israel faced when escaping. On the contrary, the mashal argues that Israel's departure made Egypt feel relieved. Both these meshalim are of a reflective character and bring out new elements when compared to the other material on the Exodus in Midrash Tehillim.

8.2.2 The future redemption

The majority of the redemptive meshalim deal with the expected redemption and here a number of themes and *Leitmotif* surface. The main two themes are the joy of the coming redemption and Israel's despair.

Joy of the coming redemption

The theme of the joy of the coming redemption is restricted to the two meshalim that enlighten Psalm 14 and in both cases the redemption is compared to a marriage. In 14.6 the mashal demonstrates how God, represented by a prince, and Israel, represented by a princess, long for their marriage which is delayed by necessary events. In 14.7 a different aspect of marriage is used, namely the pride that the father of the bride will experience. In this mashal the redemption is also associated with marriage, but in the background lingers the idea of what is known as the messianic banquet. The parallel of Pesiqta Rabbati 41 is more specific about the banquet and it is possible that Midrash Tehillim used the banquet so that Jacob, as father of the bride, can have an honorary position.

Israel's despair

The majority of the redemptive meshalim are connected to Israel's despair. Unlike the theme of joy, that is associated with just one symbol, many different characters appear in the meshalim that show Israel's despair. The *Leitmotif* appearing in these meshalim are listed below.

Complaint

The passage of 10.1 shows a contrast between Israel's special position as described in the dictum and Israel's current situation of being handed over to the robbers, as described in the mashal. The latter argues that God's absence is the reason why Israel is suffering from the nations. If God would have been on guard neither Israel nor the Torah would have been under attack from the robbers, who are to be identified as Christians. The application of Daniel 7.25 limits the period of oppression, but this is part of the exegesis and no response from God is reported.

Birthpangs

While the birthpangs are a *Leitmotif* in the eschatology of Rabbinic literature, they are usually presented as the חבלי המשיח 'the birthpangs of the Messiah'. Midrash Tehillim and Deuteronomy Rabbah bring a variant on this and speak of the birthpangs of the redemption. In contrast to the meshalim that depict God as silent and distant, the

mashal of 20.1 shows a caring and emotional God. He is suffering for two reasons: because of what Israel is experiencing and because of His grief with regard to the destruction of the Temple. In this particular case the reverse can be witnessed: it is Israel that has created a distance between God and themselves. The second mashal on the birthpangs is also found in the comments on Psalm 20.4 and it is intended as encouragement. Although God does not answer in direct speech the experience from the past, namely that of Jacob and David, give Israel confidence that God will answer to their cry.

Blame on Israel

Where 6.5 and 10.1 blamed God for the current predicaments, a different sound is heard in the mashal of 10.2. This mashal states that Israel was stubborn and did not heed the warnings of the Shechinah. God does not keep silent in this mashal, but explains that He employs the measure for measure principle.

Protection by God

Like in the passages on the redemption of the past, help and protection is expected from God. In 11.1 either David or Israel is compared to a servant that has acquired a special place in the heart of its master. This special position should guarantee the safety of the servant. If the interpretation of this mashal is to be seen in the light of the second part of the comment on Psalm 11.1, then Israel experiences a severe discrepancy between promise and reality. This issue is not solved in the passage and here too God seems absent.

A much more reassuring message is found in the mashal of the strong man and his son, which is presented in 17.9. Although the son of the mashal is not kept away from the dangers of the river, he does not have to face them all by himself. God promises Israel to be with them in dire situations. That this is indeed the case can be deduced from the fact that Israel still exists. The mashal does not give any hints about the moment that God will honour His pledge.

In 118.13 it is made absolutely clear that the nations will be allowed to execute their attacks. This is considered to be a necessity. The mashal points out that God can only punish the nations when they can be caught red handed. His help and redemption can only come after a time of, as the nimshal makes clear, severe abuse. Whereas most of the other redemptive meshalim seem to address the distress and oppression from which Israel is suffering at the present, the timeframe of 118.13 seems to be that of the more remote future. This idea is further supported by the reference to Gog and Magog in the preceding comment on Psalm 118.10 that bears a similar structure.

Sign of redemption

In most of the redemptive meshalim found in Midrash Tehillim there are no clues about the exact moment the redemption will take place. Although in 20.4 a sign is given, not much can be deduced from it. The description 'when you will see troubles which seize you, that moment you will be redeemed' can be applied to many different

situations and there is no indicator that will show whether a particular situation is the one the sign refers to.

Submotives

Next to the main message of the meshalim, submotives can be detected. Two of these were already mentioned in passing, namely God’s silence and God’s suffering. Another, not thematic, submotive is that of the use of the Greek loanword, λῆσταις, ‘robbers’, in Hebrew הלסטים, for the nations. There is only one exception, namely 118.13 where the nations are called גנבים.

Structural aspects

In the research question it was asked whether the meshalim followed the regular pattern. It is my conviction that it deviates in three ways from the regular patterns.

Characters

The meshalim do not seem to be bound to one set of characters. The most famous example being that of the king-mashal, based on the emperor, in which the king and his court are the model for God and Israel. It is not totally avoided since three redemptive meshalim compare God to a king, but the other meshalim show a variety of characters for God. Also Israel and the nations, do not have a standard symbol, although the nations are a few times depicted as robbers.

It is common for the Bible to portray both God and Israel as males. An excellent example of this is the fact that God is called an איש מלחמה (Exodus 15.3) and all the verbs that describe His actions appear in the third person masculine. Israel is also mostly depicted as masculine, as becomes clear in expressions as בני ישראל and again the use of the third person masculine. Song of Songs is an exception because it allegorically speaks of Israel as a bride, which probably has also influenced meshalim about a king and his queen which are found sparingly in the Rabbinic corpus³⁰⁰. Within such a patriarchic frame of reference the portrayal of God as mother and Israel as daughter, in more than one mashal, is remarkable. I think it would go too far to presume some kind of feministic approach, but these passages nevertheless offer an uncommon and refreshing perspective.

Table of characters appearing in the redemptive meshalim.			
Mashal	Character of God	Character of Israel	Additional characters
6.4 incomplete	absent	beaten man	robbers (Greek loanword)
6.5	tardy physician	sick man	
10.1	anonymous man	vineyard	robbers (Greek loanword)
10.2	stationhouse keeper	caravan	wild beasts, robbers (Greek loanword)
11.1	king	beloved servant	envious servants

³⁰⁰ Exodus Rabbah(W) 19.7, Leviticus Rabbah(W) 1.13, Lamentations Rabbah(W) 3.1.

14.6	prince	princess	
14.7		daughter	father of bride
17.9	Strong man	son	water (nations)
20.1	mother	pregnant daughter	neighbours (angels)
20.4 mashal 1	Father	son	
20.4 mashal 2		pregnant woman	bystanders (David, Jacob)
22.12	King	princess	bystanders (gleaners)
105.11		donkey	corpulent man (Egypt)
118.13	king		thieves (Hebrew) = peoples

‘Deviating nimshal’

Another feature that stands out is the fact that the nimshalim are not an exact copy of their meshalim. Although it could be argued that this is just an act of creativity, there is certainly more to it than this. The moment the nimshal differs from its mashal, attention is drawn to this somewhat unexpected element in the nimshal. The nimshal may deviate because elements that occur in the mashal do not have an equivalent in the nimshal, or because the nimshal contains additional material. The mashal on the caravan in 10.1 offers a combination of this. The mashal presents a dialogue between the stationhouse keeper and the caravan, but in the nimshal God keeps a monologue. In the mashal the caravan return before they were attacked, Israel only calls for help when they were already handed over to the kingdoms and the nations, the latter may also be an exaggeration. While the mashal does not dwell on what happens to the caravan after it was denied access to the stationhouse, the nimshal pays attention to the period that follows. Due to the fact that this is missing in the mashal, one cannot determine whether the period of three and a half times is an act of mercy or not.

The mashal of 20.1 can serve as second example of this phenomenon. The mashal mentions an argument between the pregnant daughter and her mother. While it is used in the sense that there is a physical distance between God and Israel it is not addressed in the nimshal. In God’s answer an element is added; namely that God is blasphemed, while in the mashal the mother is not experiencing pain herself, but suffers because of her daughter.

Inversion

In about half of the meshalim³⁰¹ the order in which the characters appear in the nimshal does not conform to the order of the mashal. What is achieved by this is that the role of one of the characters is highlighted and is given a more prominent position. For example in the mashal about the strong man and his son, in 17.9, the current is the third character. In the nimshal the nations, represented by the current, are the first

³⁰¹ Meshalim 10.1, 10.2, 17.9, 20.1, the first mashal of 20.4 and also in the defective mashal of 6.4 as recorded by Parma and Cambridge.

character that David mentions and thus all attention is directed to the predicament the nations cause to Israel.

Parallels and manuscripts

The Yalkut Shim'oni provides the majority of parallels to the meshalim of redemption, yet this anthology has a late date of composition and it clearly used manuscripts of Midrash Tehillim, or combined them³⁰² with other sources. The parallels are often on the 'surrounding' material, such as a dictum preceding the mashal, and not so much on the meshalim themselves. If one looks at the parallels on the meshalim in texts other than the Yalkut, one finds parallels to 14.7, 17.9, the second mashal of 20.4, 22.12 and 118.13. The parallel to 118.13 of Midrash Hallel is probably also later than Midrash Tehillim. Of the parallels a special position is taken by the Pesiqta Rabbati, in particular pisqa'ot 31 and 41. Since this work has its own difficulties when it comes to narrowing down the place and time of origin, it cannot be used to determine place and time for Midrash Tehillim.

The careful comparison of the manuscripts revealed that the quality of the manuscripts varied considerably. Florence and Paris often contained writing errors and at times words or entire lines have gone missing. The families that Buber discerned, had more differences between them than Buber suggested in his notes. On the other hand Florence, Vatican 76 and 81, Frankfurt, Trinity College Cambridge and Paris often have a reading that differs from Parma and Cambridge. The latter manuscripts sometimes make the connection to Israel's present³⁰³, while the other manuscripts link it to David's life. There is also a small number of passages where there are two versions; one supported by Parma and Cambridge and the other version is accounted for by (some of) the other manuscripts. Cambridge sometimes has elements in common with the majority of manuscripts and does not always present the same reading as Parma.

Buber's preference for primarily Parma and secondarily Cambridge certainly had its influence on his edition. The trend of the meshalim, but probably also for the Midrash as a whole, would be different, perhaps less negative, when another manuscript would serve as base text or when a critical edition would be created. It would probably be more concerned with the past and less with the circumstances of the days wherein the Midrash was compiled.

8.3 Redemption in the remainder of Midrash Tehillim.

The lemmatic material contains a wealth of comments on both the present situation and the expected redemption.

³⁰² For example Yalkut Psalms 663 which offers a combination of Midrash Tehillim 14.7 and Pesiqta Rabbati 41.

³⁰³ See for example also 11.4 where Parma and Cambridge have the extra explanation: *A wicked one*, that is Ishmael, *one who loves violence* that is Esau, as has been said: *I hated Esau* (Malachi 1.3).

Knowledge of redemption

Some of these passages treat similar questions as the redemptive meshalim. With regard to knowledge concerning the redemption (גאולה) or the designated time (קץ), the leading opinion is that some biblical persons were given some knowledge about the redemption³⁰⁴, but such information was not disclosed to everyone. Habakuk asked in vain for it³⁰⁵ and also Solomon³⁰⁶ was denied answers. This same passage contains a warning that a man who announces when the redemption and the designated time will come, should not be believed. Another opinion is that Israel would not believe God if He would give them clues, just like they had not believed in earlier cases³⁰⁷. In some of the redemptive meshalim a similar idea is brought forward, for example in 6.5.

Reasons for redemption

A question that is not treated in the meshalim is that of the reason for redemption. Surely Israel's dire position calls for redemption, but because of what does it take place and are there any means to speed it up? This last question is answered in at least two ways, the first answer being the application of Song of Songs 2.7. The redemption, here³⁰⁸ symbolized by love, should not be stirred up or awakened. Or to put it in the words of 8.8, the redemption should not be harvested before its time. In a sense this coincides with the idea that humankind has no knowledge concerning the redemption because this is kept within God's heart³⁰⁹. The proof for this is the literal reading of Isaiah 63.4 'for the day of vengeance is in My heart, the year of my redemption will come', since it is not revealed anywhere outside of God's heart, there is no opportunity to know its time.

A second answer is that there are exterior causes that delay the coming of the redemption. It is in this way that the mashal of 14.6 understands Isaiah 63.4; God longs for the redemption, but other events, in this case the vengeance, must take place first. Another view is that Justice (הדין) does not yet permit that the children of Israel are redeemed³¹⁰ and according to 29.1 it is Israel that withholds the redemption because they do not talk back to God.

There are also different opinions about the causes for redemption. A few passages suggest that humankind can indeed speed up the redemption. In 95.2 Rabbi Levi foresees the immediate redemption if Israel would keep one Sabbath as they ought. In 106.9 no less than five things are mentioned, namely trouble (צרה), prayer (תפלה),

³⁰⁴ See 31.7 that says that Jacob and Daniel had information about the קץ and to Samuel the Messiah ben David had been made known.

³⁰⁵ Midrash Tehillim 77.1, 77.2 and lastly 90.7 in which Habakkuk seeks an answer about God refraining from intervention.

³⁰⁶ 9.2.

³⁰⁷ Again 7.17.

³⁰⁸ Midrash Tehillim 9.2.

³⁰⁹ 7.17, 9.2

³¹⁰ 59.5

merit of the fathers (זכות האבות), repentance (תשובה)³¹¹ and the designated time (קץ) that will bring the redemption near. A variation on this is present in 94.5 where the merit of the fathers, merit of faith³¹², merit of God's name and the merit of the Torah are listed. Yet another thought is that good deeds can initiate God's redemption³¹³.

The leading thought is to place the redemption entirely in God's hands. At least three motifs can be discerned here. The first is connected to vengeance. The reasoning is as follows: God did not spare His own House and Temple and any remorse is certainly to be expected for those who destroyed the Temple and their punishment will be harsh³¹⁴. To this may probably be added that a retaliation for what the nations and kingdoms have done to Israel is expected. The second motif is connected to the glorification of God's name. This thought is found with respect to the past redemptions³¹⁵ and also with respect to the coming redemption³¹⁶. The third reason is that Israel seeks a lasting redemption³¹⁷. The redemptions of the past are now attributed to human redeemers, such as Moses, Joshua, the judges and king whose redemption has always been followed by yet another servitude or oppression³¹⁸.

Messianic aspects

Despite this strong preference and belief in God as the only redeemer, Midrash Tehillim sometimes presents different thoughts on this. The most important alternative redeemer is the Messiah, more specifically the Messiah ben David. His role is not clear-cut and his exact place in the events to come is obscure and there does not seem to be a consensus. For example in 18.35, which displays a progress in time, the coming of the Messiah is placed after the ingathering of the exiles, yet in 87.6 the nations bring the exiles to the Messiah. Another passage places the Messiah in the fourth kingdom, Edom³¹⁹, which is even earlier. According to 72.6, 90.12 and 93.3 the Messiah, or the name of the Messiah, existed before the world was created. In 72.6 is also said that the Messiah will not taste death. A different view is presented in 2.9 where the Messiah is seen as a new creation. The moment when the the Messiah is expected to come is not very clear. It seems that there a distinction needs to be made between the time the Messiah becomes active and the era known as the ימות המשיח 'Days of the Messiah'. For several passages it does not seem relevant to mention when the Messiah will come and for how long.

In a number of passages the Messiah is expected during the last of the four kingdoms, Edom. Two passages depict him as a warrior. The first time this is done in Midrash Tehillim 18.5 that draws a parallel between David and the Messiah who both had four

³¹¹ 76.3 depicts God as hoping that Israel will repent soon so that He can rebuild His House and Temple.

³¹² See also 31.8 and 40.1.

³¹³ 44.2

³¹⁴ 3.1, 9.12, 48.1 and 99.1.

³¹⁵ 44.1 and 107.1

³¹⁶ 67.1, 107.1.

³¹⁷ 31.2, 36.6, 50.3 and 118.22.

³¹⁸ 31.2 and 36.6.

³¹⁹ 22.9

enemies to fight. The Messiah is expected to appear during the wicked kingdom, that is Edom, and be victorious over it. A similar belief is found in 22.9 where, in a role like that of Chananiah, Mishael and Azariah, Esther and Mordechai and the Hasmonean house, the Messiah is expected to rise against Edom.

A variant on the Messiah as a warrior is the concept of the two Messiahs, the Messiah ben Ephraim and the Messiah ben David. In 60.3 Parma and Cambridge present a part in which God promises that He will redeem Israel through the hand of the Messiah ben Ephraim and the Messiah ben David. First the Messiah ben Ephraim will be king and after him the Messiah ben David who probably is also the poor King Messiah who will trample Edom. Later on in the passage the cities that the Messiah will attack are identified as Rome and Constantinople. This may actually be an important clue to the date of this passage. Around 285 CE the Roman Empire was divided into a Western Roman Empire and in an Eastern Roman Empire, each having an imperial city; Rome and Constantinople. This situation lasted until 476 CE when the Emperor of the Western Roman Empire was overthrown. In 87.6 the same manuscripts speak of the two Messiahs. The nations of the world will bring gifts, namely the exiled of Israel, to the King Messiah who is identified as the Messiah ben David and the Messiah ben Ephraim. Later on in the passage the term King Messiah is taken up again. In these two passages the Messiah ben Ephraim is not depicted as the Messiah who will die in battle, as is done in Talmud Bavli Sukkah 52 B, rather he seems to either continue to exist or, as the last passage would suggest, he and the Messiah ben David seem to exist as one King Messiah. A second variant is found in 43.1 where a comparison between Israel in Egypt and 'this generation' is made. In Psalm 105, that is quoted in this passage, reference is made to the sending of Moses and Aaron and for this generation the darshan also calls for two redeemers, namely Elijah the prophet and the Messiah ben David.

Next to this a somewhat different, yet also fierce, role is found, namely that of the Messiah as ruler. The first passage that should be mentioned is 2.3. It speaks of the 'time to come', לעתיד לבא, in which he sends a plague of locusts and the angel of death against rebelling provinces. A similar teaching is present in 21.3 and although the Messiah is not mentioned by name, he most likely is the anonymous person to whom the reports of rebelling provinces are brought. Also in this case the price for rebellion will be high for the angel of death will be sent against these provinces. In 29.2 the redemption is attributed to God and the Messiah punishes the wicked of the nations. This latter passage is close to the concept of the Messiah as a judge, of which is spoken in 72.3 and 72.4.

The other passages display a toned down Messianism in the sense that the Messiah is present, but not in any heroic role. He is depicted as teaching precepts to the nations³²⁰ and he will read and study Torah while God fights³²¹. This could be a sign of

³²⁰ 21.1

³²¹ 110.4

rabbinization for the Messiah is here presented as a Torah scholar³²². Some descriptive passages have the Messiah sitting at God's right hand³²³, being offered a request by God³²⁴, being given glory and majesty by God³²⁵ and giving of his gold so that people can pay their debts³²⁶.

P.S. Alexander discerns two broad ideal types of Messianism in the Rabbinic sources: historical realism³²⁷, with a sub category of magical realism, and mystical messianism³²⁸ (a spiritual, cosmic process). Midrash Tehillim would have to be categorized as mainly historical realistic. This category can be further narrowed down to either a gradual type of messianism or a catastrophic type. In Midrash Tehillim the gradual type is present. This is for example articulated in 18.36 שאין הגאולה באה על 18.36 'for the redemption does not come to this people at once, but little by little'. The reason that is provided is that the Israelites already suffer and they would not be able to bear the great troubles that accompany a great redemption. Even though there seems to be a consideration of what Israel can endure, the Midrash says time and again that the moment has come that Israel will collapse under its burden. The troubles have accumulated to the point of turning into a catastrophe. The calls for help are primarily addressed at the Lord, whose immediate help is required.

Other eschatological features

Yet not everything will be sorted out once the redemption has come. The redemption is to be followed by other events that together form the eschaton. Midrash Tehillim does not provide a kind of masterplan of the events to come. The closest to such a thing is found in 26.6 where one finds the days of the Messiah, the days of Gog and Magog and the time to come. It is evident that this is only a rough schedule, missing essential elements such as the ingathering of the exiles, the rebuilding of the Temple, the resurrection of the dead, the banquet during which Leviathan will be served, Judgment Day and a division of the people of the earth into Gehenna and Gan Eden. These elements are all present in Midrash Tehillim, but how they cohere is not pointed out by the Midrash itself and requires further research.

8.4 Redemption in Midrash Tehillim and in other Rabbinic Texts

The theme of redemption is certainly not a new element in Jewish thinking since it was already present in the Bible. The redemptions of the past and certainly also the many

³²² 'The rabbinization of the popular doctrine of the Messiah comes out in other ways, most notably in casting David and the Messiah as fundamentally Torah scholars', thus Alexander, P.S. 'The Rabbis and Messianism', p. 21

³²³ 18.29

³²⁴ 2.10 and 21.4

³²⁵ 21.2 and 104.5

³²⁶ 87.3

³²⁷ Thus Alexander, 'The Rabbis and Messianism'. The Messiah is a human king and his kingdom is on earth.

³²⁸ Referring to a spiritual, cosmic process.

prophetic passages determined the type of questions that were asked and the expectations that were developed. Besides this traditional influence, the political and religious circumstances had certainly an impact. Events that evidently played a role are foreign rule such as the Greeks and the Romans and later the Arabs³²⁹, the rise of Christianity which ultimately become the state religion in 380 CE and later the rise of Islam, the Destruction of the Temple in 68 CE and the lost revolt by Bar Kochba in 132-135 CE.

In his elaborate article 'רעיון הגאולה באגדת תנאים והאמוראים' A. Marmorstein gives an overview of the issues related to redemption addressed by Rabbinic authorities of tannaitic and amoraic times. He describes the various trains of thought in a chronological order that is based on the centuries in which these Rabbis lived. He does this critically, see for example his treatment of Midrash Tehillim 36.6 where he doubts that Rabbi Jochanan is indeed the tradent of the saying³³⁰. Fundamental questions that were addressed by various Rabbinic texts also appear in Midrash Tehillim³³¹, which on the one hand shows that Midrash Tehillim treats the theme extensively and on the other hand it confirms our theory that redemption is a very important theme within Midrash Tehillim.

A dominant question concerned the reason why Israel would be redeemed, a question that came to be extended after the destruction of Betar³³² to the reasons for the Exodus. The answers can be narrowed down to two basic thoughts: redemption is something humans cannot, or should not, influence or redemption is something that can be brought about by human behaviour. The first thought is connected to the קץ, the designated time, which can be shortened by God as is stated in Pesiqta de Rav Kahana 5.6, Pesiqta Rabbati 15 and Midrash Tehillim 18.22. Calculations were not allowed, not only because they were inaccurate since God could speed up the קץ, but also because they could lead to false hopes and disappointments. Warnings against these calculations are among others found in Mishnah Sanhedrin 10.1 and Avot 3.11. Songs of Songs Rabbah 8.11, with a parallel in Talmud Bavli Ketubot 111A and Tanchuma דברים 4, warns against attempts to 'push' the קץ, which is comparable to the warning not to pluck the redemption before its time as is written in Midrash Tehillim 8.1. The thought that humans can bring about the redemption if they do the right thing, includes repentance (Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 33B, Talmud Jerushalmi Ta'anit 1.1, Tanchuma (Buber) בחוקותי 5), studying Torah (Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 99B, and Deuteronomy Rabbah 8.3) and keeping Sabbath according to the halachah (Talmud Bavli Sabbath 118A, Exodus Rabbah 5.24 and 25.16). All these aspects are also found in Midrash Tehillim, along with the teaching that there are five, or even more, things that will bring the redemption. In Midrash Tehillim 106.6 five things are listed in an order that according to Marmorstein is probably the best. Parallels are present in Talmud

³²⁹ In Midrash Tehillim the Arab conquest is not an issue, the enemy is Edom, i.e. the Roman Empire or Christianity.

³³⁰ Marmorstein, רעיון הגאולה, p.58.

³³¹ As a matter of fact, many quotes that Marmorstein has included on the various questions come from Midrash Tehillim.

³³² Marmorstein, רעיון הגאולה, p.28.

Jerushalmi Ta'anit 1.1, Pesiqta Rabbati 5 and Deuteronomy Rabbah 2.13. In these latter teachings a combination of both thoughts is found.

Another important question, treated abundantly in Midrash Tehillim, is the identity of the Redeemer. The general idea in the period of 70 CE to the 4th century CE was that God was the Redeemer³³³. Marmorstein bases this conclusion on teachings of the third century Rabbi Jochanan and Rabbi Samuel bar Nachmani³³⁴ and Rabbi Acha of the fourth century and all of their quotes are taken from Midrash Tehillim. The coming redemption is contrasted to the former redemptions by flesh and blood that were always followed by another servitude. This idea is not only found in Midrash Tehillim³³⁵, but for example also in Midrash Zutah on Song of Songs 1.1 and 1.4 and throughout the Tanchuma. The reasons why God will redeem vary, He may do it for His name's sake (Midrash Tehillim 44.1), mercy (Midrash Tehillim 72.1) and because of any of the reasons mentioned above.

In some texts the Messiah is expected to redeem Israel. This was not a popular option, partly because of Christianity, partly because of the defeat of Bar Kochba, partly because false messiahs that had risen and partly because God was preferred as Redeemer. Rabbi Hillel even taught that the Messiah had already been 'consumed' in the days of Hizkiah (Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 99A), so the coming of the Messiah should not be expected at all. Another view is that the Messiah is already present and resides in the gates of Rome (idem 98A). Yet another teaching by Rabbi Jochanan bar Napachah concentrates on the signs that will precede the coming of the Messiah, such as a decline in the number of students, 'eyes that get shut' and other troubles (idem 97A). A discussion that is also present in Midrash Tehillim³³⁶, without turning the Messiah into the Redeemer, concerns the nature of the Messiah. Along with Genesis Rabbah (Theodor-Albeck) 1, Talmud Bavli Pesachim 54A, Nedarim 39B the Name of the Messiah was created³³⁷ along with among others the Torah and the Throne of Glory before the world was created. In Amoraic teachings the Name of the Messiah was replaced by the Messiah himself³³⁸. While Midrash Tehillim does not keep silent about the Messiah, it has a limited role for the Messiah. In the second half of the Pesiqta Rabbati, which contained parallels to Midrash Tehillim, the expectations about the Messiah run much higher than in Midrash Tehillim.

Midrash Tehillim is a late Midrash and because of its date it may have fitted in the apocalyptic revival that took place in Judaism, Christianity, and later also Islam, in the

³³³ Marmorstein, רעיון הגאולה, p.54.

³³⁴ On the other hand we do find his teaching that sustenance is to be valued more because that is connected to God, while the redemption is by an angel, see Midrash Tehillim 80.2, 89.2 and also Pesiqta Rabbati 33.

³³⁵ Midrash Tehillim is somewhat ambiguous about this. It tries hard to prove that former redemptions were by God, yet when it is theologically less convenient it attributes former redemptions to human redeemers. Midrash Tehillim 31.2 contains these two contradicting thoughts.

³³⁶ Midrash Tehillim 72.6, 90.12 and 93.3.

³³⁷ Or alternatively 'came up in thought'.

³³⁸ See for example Pesiqta Rabbati 33. Midrash Tehillim has both the Name of the Messiah and the Messiah.

6th- 8th centuries. Texts that belong to this category³³⁹ are, besides 3 Enoch and the Prayer of Simeon bar Yochai, the Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, Sefer Zerubbabel and the Targum on the Songs of Songs. While these last three texts belong to different genres, respectively rewritten bible and aggadic narratives, they all tell an ongoing history interspersed with apocalyptic elements. This is probably the strongest in the Targum on the Song of Songs which presents a holistic reading starting with the Exodus and taking the narrative towards the defeat of Gog and Magog and the Messianic Age. In particular the Sefer Zerubbabel is favourable towards a messianic figure, in this case the Messiah ben Joseph who paves the way for the Messiah ben David. These two features, a messianic figure who plays a prominent role, and a climactic presentation of events to come are not found in Midrash Tehillim. Also the strong preference for a redemption by God which is found in Midrash Tehillim seems to be more in line with the earlier tannaitic ideas and the return to these ideas in the fourth century (Rabbi Acha).

³³⁹ Alexander, *Targum Canticles*, Introduction, p. 56.

Appendix A Fragmentary redemptive mashal

In Midrash Tehillim 6.4 the outlines of a mashal are given, but it is impossible to pinpoint what the message of the mashal is. The nimshal is so short that the apodosis is missing and it cannot be reconstructed from the mashal. The manuscripts differ on this point, resulting in two versions. Buber's version is supported by Parma and Cambridge and the second version is found in the other manuscripts.

In Buber's version the darshan seems to have played with the idea that the robbers, note the Greek loanword ληστές, used criminal kinds of attack that are mentioned in Exodus 21.18-21.20. In verse 18 is written how the person that was beaten up falls unto his bed, which is one of the motifs that reappears in the mashal.

Midrash Tehillim 6.4 The man who was beaten up by robbers

חנני ה' כי אומלל אני רפאני כי נבהלו עצמי.

משל לאיש אחד שתפסוהו לסטין, וכל אחד מהן מכהו כמכתו, יש מהן בידו, ויש מהן באגרופו, ויש מהן באבנו, ויש מהן במקלו, עד שנשמט מהן, הגיע לביתו ונפל למטה, וצוח עצמותי עצמותי, כך אומות העולם משעבדין את ישראל בכל מיני שעבוד קשה ושמודות וגזירות רעות.

Have mercy upon me, oh Lord, for I am feeble. Heal me for my bones are dismayed (Psalm 6.3). It may be compared to a man whom robbers seized and every one of them struck him according to his blow, one of them with his hand, another with his fist, one of them with his stone and another with his stick until he slipped away from them. He arrived at his home, fell down on his bed and cried 'My bones, my bones!'

Likewise the nations of the world enslave Israel with every kind of harsh servitude, persecutions and evil decrees.

Midrash Tehillim 6.4 (according to Vatican 81; Version B)

חנני יי כי אומלל אני.

משל לאדם שתפסוהו לסטים והיה כל אחד ואחד מתעולל בו להכותו. יש מהם בעצים ויש מהם באגרופין וכשהניחוהו הלך לביתו על המטה ואמר עצמו עצמותי. כך ישראל אומות העולם משעבדין בהם בכל מלכות ומלכות ובכל מיני שעבוד וכשנגיע לבנין בית המקדש שיבנה במהרה בימינו אמר ישראל לפני הקב"ה חנני יי כי אומלל אני.

Have mercy upon me, oh Lord, for I am feeble. (Psalm 6.3). It may be compared to a man whom robbers seized and every one of them abused him by striking him. Some of them with pieces of wood, some of them with fists. When they had left him alone, he went home, (went) on the bed and said 'My bones, my bones!'

Likewise it is with Israel. The nations of the world enslave them during each and every kingdom and with all kinds of servitude. When we will come to the building of the Temple, that it may be built soon, in our lifetime, Israel will say to the Holy One blessed be He: *Have mercy upon me, oh Lord, for I am feeble.* (Psalm 6.3)

Appendix B Parallels to the meshalim

In this section the parallels to the redemptive meshalim of Midrash Tehillim can be found. The texts of the Yalkut Shi'moni will only be translated when they differ significantly from what is found in the manuscripts, or when they differ significantly from what is found in the other parallels. Those parallels that are found in other texts that form only a remote parallel, will also be given only in Hebrew.

Parallel to Midrash Tehillim 6.5

Yalkut Psalms 635

This parallel shows a mixture of the two streams of manuscripts that contain this tradition. It seems to lean more towards the version found in Florence, Vatican 76, Vatican 81, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris. This can be deduced from the fact that it mentions Rav Kahana as tradent and from the fact that the situation is applied to David, not to Israel as Parma and Cambridge do.

ילקוט שמעוני תהילים רמז תרלה

ונפשי נבהלה מאד, ואתה ה' הבטחתני עמו אנכי בצרה. מהו עד מתי אמר רב כהנא משל לחולה שהיה מתרפא ע"פ רופא והיה מקוה מתי יבוא בארבע שעות או בה', בא ששית ולא בא, עשירית ולא בא, עם דמדומי חמה שרי ממשמש ואתי, אמר לו אם ישהה עוד צבחר נפשי נפקת - כך אמר דוד ונפשי נבהלה מאד ואתה ה' עד מתי שאתה הוא הרופא ושהית לבוא אלי

Parallel to Midrash Tehillim 10.1

Yalkut Daniel 1066

Several elements that were present in the manuscripts resurface in this parallel. Like Parma and Cambridge, the Yalkut mentions that the wicked wage war against Israel. The monologue by God is not present in the Yalkut and like the manuscripts that do not have this, it does have the question *Where is Israel called the highest?* It is interesting to see that the second part of the passage, beginning with the mashal, resembles Florence, Vatican 81, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris. There is a preference for מבקשים, the fence is mentioned separately and the times are identified as the three pilgrimage festivals. There is no connection to the Psalm verse which has also resulted in the absence of a complaint against God's position.

ילקוט שמעוני דניאל רמז תתרסו

ומלין לצד עלאה ימלל, אמר ר' יוסי אין הרשעים מזדווגים לישראל אלא אם כן מחרפים ומגדפים שנאמר ומלין לצד עלאה ימלל זה הקב"ה ואח"כ ולקדישי עליונים יבלא אלו ישראל כמה דאת אמר קדושים תהיו, ומנין שנקראו עליונים שנאמר ונתנך ה' אלהיך עליון, משל למה הדבר דומה לאדם שהיה לו כרם והיו הליסטים מבקשים ליכנס לתוכו ולא היו יכולים שהיה לו גדר מה עשו פרצו את הגדר ונכנסו לתוכו, כך עובדי אלילים באים ומזדווגים לישראל שהם כרמו של הקב"ה שנאמר כי כרם ה' צבאות בית ישראל, והם מחרפים להקב"ה שנאמר ומלין לצד עלאה ימלל ואח"כ באים לישראל ולקדישי עליונים יבלא, ויסבר להשניה זמנין אלו שלש רגלים, ודת זו התורה שנאמר מימינו אש דת למו, ויתיהבון בידיה, יכול לעולם, תלמוד לומר עד עדין ועדין ופלא עדן, ואני הייתי על אובל (ביחזקאל ברמז שלי"ו)

Parallels to Midrash Tehillim 10.2

There are two groups of parallels to this derasha, the first group deals with the warning by the Shechinah and the second group pays attention to the 'measure for measure' principle. Texts that belong to the first group are: Lamentations Rabbah (Wilna) petichah 25, Pesiqta de Rav Kahana (Mandelbaum) parasha 13.11 and Yalkut Jeremiah remez 257. These last two texts let the Shechinah say verses which in Midrash Tehillim appear in the nimshal.

איכה רבה (וילנא) פתיחתות כה

א"ר יהודה ברי סימון מן החומה לעיר דכתיב (מיכה ו') קול ה' לעיר יקרא, מן העיר להר הזיתים דכתיב (יחזקאל י"א) ויעל כבוד ה' מעל תוך העיר ויעמד על ההר אשר מקדם לעיר, א"ר יונתן שלש שנים ומחצה עשתה השכינה ושבתי על הר הזיתים סבורה שמא ישראל יעשו תשובה ולא עשו, והיתה בת קול מכרזת ואומרת (ירמיה ג') שובו בנים שובבים (מלאכי ג') שובו אלי ואשובה אליכם, וכיון שלא עשו תשובה אמרה (הושע ה') אלך ואשובה אל מקומי

פסיקתא דרב כהנא (מנדלבויס) פרשה יג יא

א"ר יונתן שלש שנים ומחצה עשת השכינה שרויה בהר הזיתים ומכרזת שלש פעמי בכל יום ואומרת שובו בנים שובבים ארפא משובתיכם (ירמיה ג: כב), וכיון שלא חזרו התחילה השכינה פורחת באויר ואומ' את הפסוק הזה, אלך ואשובה אל מקומי עד אשר יאשמו ובקשו פני בצר להם ישחרונני (הושע ה: טו).

ילקוט שמעוני ירמיהו רמז רנז

אמר ר' יוחנן שלש שנים ומחצה עשתה השכינה שרויה בהר הזיתים ומכרזת שלש פעמים בכל יום ואומרת שובו בנים שובבים ארפא משובתיכם, וכיון שלא חזרו התחילה השכינה פורחת באויר ואומרת את הפסוק הזה אלכה ואשובה אל מקומי עד אשר יאשמו ובקשו בני בצר להם ישחרונני

The second group consists of Pesiqta Rabbati 31 and Yalkut Psalms 647 that comment on Psalm 10.1 and that show four prophets complaining about the measure for measure principle. David is one of four prophets who are complaining about this principle and Psalm 10.1 is David's formulation of the complaint. God's reply is that Israel distanced itself from God. Then follows Rabbi Jonathan's teaching on the Shechinah which is situated during a siege of three and a half years. His teaching is illustrated with Micha 6.9, not quoted in Midrash Tehillim, and Isaiah 55.6. The element of repentance that is alluded to in the text of Midrash Tehillim is mentioned explicitly in the Rabbati text ולא בקשו לעשות תשובה. It seems that both Midrash Tehillim and Pesiqta Rabbati added elements to Rabbi Jonathan's teaching on the Shechinah. It is interesting to see that despite the difference in setting, prophetic protest versus a mashal, these two texts present a tradition that proves Psalm 10.1 to be inappropriate and that leans in its reasoning on Israel's refusal to heed God's words. It is hard to say if Midrash Tehillim and Pesiqta Rabbati influenced one another on this point. They share a tradition, but the outcome is so different that it does not seem very likely that one text influenced the other.

The Yalkut follows the explanation that the Rabbati text offers.

פסיקתא רבתי (איש שלום) פרשה לא ד"ה דבר אחר ותאמר

דבר אחר ותאמר ציון עזבני ארבעה נביאים קראו תגר כנגד מידת הדין, דוד, וירמיה, ואסף, ובניו של קרח, דוד צווח למה ה' תעמוד ברחוק תעלים לעתות בצרה (תהלים י"א), אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא לדוד, הא דוד שכן רע אתה, שיבבא (מני) בישא [מני מעלתא] ולא מני נפקתא [הם הרחיקוני מעליהם] ואתה עומד ואומר למה ה' תעמוד ברחוק, אמר רבי יונתן שלש שנים ומחצה שהיו השונאים מקיפים את ירושלים הייתה השכינה עומדת על הר הזיתים והייתה קוראה בכל יום קול ה' לעיר יקרא וגוי (מיכה ו' ט') וכן דרשו ה' בהמצאו קראוהו בהיותו קרוב (ישעיה נ"ה ו') ולא בקשו לעשות תשובה, [ואתה] עומד ואומר למה (אתה) ה' תעמוד ברחוק

ילקוט שמעוני תהילים רמז תרמז

למה ה' תעמוד ברחוק, ארבעה נביאים קראו תגר כנגד מדת הדין דוד, וירמיה, אסף, ובני קרח. דוד צווח למה ה' תעמוד ברחוק, א"ל הקב"ה, דוד שכן רע אתה, ולא הם הרחיקוני מעליהם א"ר יונתן בר' אליעזר שלש שנים ומחצה היו שונאים מקיפין את ירושלים, ושכינה עומדת על הר הזיתים, ומכרזת דרשו ה' בהמצאו, ולא היו משגיחין, ואתה אומר, למה ה' תעמוד ברחוק

Parallels to Midrash Tehillim 11.1

In Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 107A we also find a reference to Psalm 11.1, albeit in a completely different context. It is situated around David's request to be tested by the Lord, just like the patriarchs were. God is willing to do so and at the same time He warns David that it will have something to do with adultery. David failed this test and committed adultery with Bath Sheba for which he now asks forgiveness because he fears that his sin may cause people to say that God's mountain, i.e. David, had to flee like a bird. There are no indications that here God's residence has to be considered as a pars pro toto for God.

The second, later, parallel is found in Yalkut Psalms 652 where a combination of the Sanhedrin text and our passage is present. The Yalkut has made some modifications such as adding the adjective 'great' to 'your mountain' and it contains signs of censorship, such as replacing the 'nations of world' by 'worshippers of idols', in the part that has been taken from Midrash Tehillim. Rabbi Acha is not mentioned as the source of the saying, his remark about the Rabbi and the student is also not present. The question where the Lord is right now, is also not brought up in the Yalkut. It seems to be typical for the Yalkut to leave out any parts that may cast doubt on God's presence or actions.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין דף קז עמוד א

דרש רבא: מאי דכתיב (תהלים י"א א) למנצח לדוד בה' חסיתי איך תאמרו לנפשי נודי הרכם צפר, אמר דוד לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבונו של עולם, מחול לי על אותו עון, שלא יאמרו: הר שבכם צפור נדדתו

למנצח לדוד בה' חסיתי, איך תאמרו לנפשי וגו'. דרש רבא אמר דוד לפני הקב"ה רבש"ע, מחול לי על אותו עון, שלא יאמר הר גדול שבהם צפור נדדתו, (ברמז קמ"ז). דבר אחר מהו הרכס צפור אמר ר' חמא כשגלו ישראל, היו עובדי אלילים שמחים עליהם, להגלותם ממקומם. נודי אין כתיב, אלא נודו, כלפי מעלן וכלפי מטן אמרו, כלפי מעלה אמרו כצפור נודדת מקנה כן איש נודד ממקומו, ואין איש אלא הקב"ה, שנאמר ה' איש מלחמה, ואין מקומו אלא בית המקדש, שנאמר זאת מנוחתי עדי עד. כי הנה הרשעים ידרכון קשת, (ברמז תי"ב

The mashal on the servant is present in Yalkut Psalms 875 where it is applied to David who is about to descend to meet Goliath. The verse that is commented on is Psalm 118.6 that was introduced at the beginning of Midrash Tehillim 11.1. The people who are jealous of the beloved servant are described as עבדיו. The saying by the servant himself resembles Vatican 76, with the exception of רחמים 'shows mercy' instead of חיים. Psalm 11.1 reinforces the idea of security. The Yalkut encourages David who went to face Goliath, i.e. the context is different.

ילקוט שמעוני תהילים רמז תתעה

ה' לי לא אירא מה יעשה לי אדם, משל למה הדבר דומה, למלך שהיה לו עבד והיה מחבבו מכל עבדיו והיו שאר עבדיו מתקנאין בו, אמר מרי רחמים לי מה איניש יכיל לי, וכה"א בך ה' חסיתי אל אבושה לעולם.

Parallels to Midrash Tehillim 14.6

Leviticus Rabbah (both Wilna and Margulies) 24.4 comments on Psalm 20.3 and discusses what God will bring forth from Zion, which is also done at the beginning of Midrash Tehillim 14.6. Despite the fact that the same tradent, Rabbi Levi, is mentioned the parallels do deviate with respect to the number of things and the verses that are quoted. The Leviticus Rabbah text mentions more things, which lies in the fact that in two cases a combination of things coming from Zion is made. The number of scriptural verses is the same, but there are three verses that are not the same. Except for Isaiah 2.3, all the quotes in Midrash Tehillim 14.6 are from the Psalms. Leviticus Rabbah quotes Joel 2.1 and has two other Psalm verses. The order of the verses quoted differs greatly; Leviticus Rabbah begins with Psalm 14.7, while Midrash Tehillim ends with Psalm 14.7 so that both the lemma and the theme of salvation have become the end result of the list.

ויקרא רבה (מרגליות) פרשה כד ד

ד"א ישלח עזרך מקודש. אמי ר' לוי כל טובות וברכות ונחמות שהקב"ה עתיד ליתן לישראל אינן אלא מציון. ישועות מציון, מי יתן מציון ישועות ישראל (תהלים יד, ז). עוז מציון, מטה עזרך ישלח יי"י מציון (שם/תהלים/קי, ב). ברכה מציון, ברוך יי"י מציון (שם/תהלים/קלה, כא). שופר מציון, תקעו שופר בציון (יואל ב, א). טל וברכה וחיים מציון, כטל חרמון שיורד על הררי ציון (תהלים קלג, ג). תורה מציון, שני כי מציון תצא תורה (ישעיה ב, ג). עזרה וסיוע מציון, ישלח עזרך מקדש. מקדש, מקידוש מעשים שיש בידך. ומציון יסעדך (תהלים כ, ג), מציון מעשים שיש בידך. אמי

הקב"ה למשה לך אמור להן לבני ישראל בניי כשם שאני פרוש כך תהו אתם פרושין, כשם שאני קדוש כך תהו קדושים, קדושים תהיו.

A closer parallel is *Pesiqta Rabbati* 41 that forms a parallel to *Midrash Tehillim* 14.6 and 14.7. For 14.6 it contains the teaching about the schoolchildren. This passage begins with quoting Joel 2.3 that speaks of the blowing of the Shofar in Zion. Braude³⁴⁰ writes about this verse that it at one time was the haftarah for New Year's Day. *Pesiqta Rabbati* is very explicit about what the salvation should encompass: מי יתן שיגיע הקץ שאקרב גאולתכם. At the end of the exposition on Psalm 48.3 this verse from Joel is quoted again. The tradents as well as the formulation differ from *Midrash Tehillim* 14.6.

פסיקתא רבתי (איש שלום) פרשה מא

תקעו שופר בציון זה שאמר הכתוב מי יתן מציון ישועות ישראל [וגו'] יגל יעקב ישמח ישראל (תהלים י"ד ז' ונ"ג ז'), לפי שבשעה שעמדו ישראל בסיני ואמר להם משה מבקש הקדוש ברוך הוא ליתן לכם [התורה] אמרו לו רבינו משה כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע (שמות כ"ד ז') מיהו מבקשים אנו לשמוע מפיו, אמר רב חנן בשם רבי אחא ערב לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא התשובה שהשיבו למשה ומיד נעקר כל יצר הרע שהיה בהם, הוא שהקדוש ברוך הוא אומר מי יתן והיה לבבם זה להם ליראה אותי (דברים ה' כ"ה) [לבם] אינו אומר אלא לבבם, יצר הטוב יצה"ר שהיה בהם נעשו שניהם לב אחד של יצר טוב, אמר רבי יוחנן הקדוש ברוך הוא עומד ואומר מי יתן והיה לבבם זה להם ולא לומר הן של מי לא שלך לעקור יצר הרע מבינותינו, שאילו שאלו אותה שעה שלא למות לא היה מתים, שאילו [שאלו] שיעקר יצר הרע היה נעקר מהם, אלא ולא נתן ה' לכם לב לדעת (שם /דברים/ כ"ט ג') אתמה, [אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא] לפי שאני אמרתי מי יתן והיה לבבם זה אף אתם סופכם להיות מתאווים ואומרים מי יתן מציון, דבר אחר מי יתן בשני מקומות, א"ר הונא לפי ששני פעמים התינוקות אומרים בבית הכנסת אחת בבוקר ואחת בערב הושיענו ה' אלהינו (תהלים ק"ו מ"ז) (הושיעה ה' אלהינו) לפיכך הקדוש ברוך הוא אומר שני פעמים מי יתן מציון ישועות, מי יתן שיגיע הקץ שאקרב גאולתכם, ר' יהודה בי רבי שלום בשם רבי שמעון בן לקיש אומר לאו [מן השם הוא זה] אלא שכתוב בשני מקומות, בתהלים הושיענו ה' אלהינו וקבצנו והצילנו מן הגוים (שם) ובדברי הימים נאמר הושיענו [אלהי] ישענו [וקבצנו והצילנו מן הגוים וגו'] (דברי הימים א' ט"ז ל"ה) לפיכך הקדוש ברוך הוא אומר מי יתן מציון שני פעמים.

A parallel on the mashal is only present in *Yalkut Psalms* 663 that seems to represent both streams of the manuscripts of *Midrash Tehillim*. In this remez a parallel to *Midrash Tehillim* 14.7 can be found as well.

ילקוט שמעוני תהילים רמז תרסג

מי יתן מציון ישועות ישראל, (כתוב ברמז שצ"ב). א"ר יוחנן הקב"ה עומד ואומר מי יתן והיה לבבם זה להם, אמר הקב"ה אני אמרתי מי יתן, אף אתם סופכם להיות מתאווים ואומרים, מי יתן מציון, אתה מוצא ב' פעמים כתוב בספר תהלים, מי יתן מציון, אחד בספר ראשון, ואחד בספר שני, ולמה אמר ר' לוי הרב אומר כתוב אחד, והתלמיד אומר כתוב אחד, הרב אומר מי יתן והיה לבבם זה להם והתלמיד אומר מי יתן כל עם ה' נביאים, ולא דברי הרב ולא דברי התלמיד מתקיים בעולם הזה, אבל בעולם הבא מתקיימין שניהם, דברי הרב מנין ונתתי לכם לב חדש, דברי התלמיד

³⁴⁰ W.G. Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati discourses for Feasts, Fasts, and Special Sabbaths*, New Haven 1968, p. 724.

מנין אשפוך רוחי על כל בשר. ד"א למה כתוב שני פעמים ר' יודן, בשם ר' יהושע בן לוי לפי שהתנוקות אומרים בכל יום שני פעמים, אחד שחרית ואחד ערבית, הושיענו אלהי ישענו, לפיכך כתיב שני פעמים מי יתן. א"ר תנחום אמרית יתיה לפני ר' נחוניא, ואמר לי לא מן השם הוא זה, אלא מפני שכתוב שני פעמים הושיענו אלהי ישענו, אחד בספר תהלים, ואחד בדברי הימים, לפיכך כתוב שתי פעמים מי יתן. משל לבן מלך שאירס בת מלך, וקבעו פרוזדגמא ביום פלוני, בנו של מלך מצפה לשמחתו, ובתו של מלך מצפה לשמחתה, מי מעכב פרוזדגמא מעכבת - כך הקב"ה מחכה לישועתן של ישראל, וישראל מחכין לישועתו, מי מעכב פרוזדגמא, שנאמר כי יום נקם בלבי.

Parallels to Midrash Tehillim 14.7

Pesiqta Rabbati 41 also forms the parallel to Midrash Tehillim 14.7 and in this case it also contains a mashal.

Midrash Tehillim 14.7	Pesiqta Rabbati 41
<p>יגל יעקב ישמח ישראל.</p> <p>יגל אברהם וישמח יצחק</p> <p>אין כתיב כאן, אלא</p> <p>יגל יעקב ישמח ישראל,</p> <p>ולמה יעקב שמח מכל האבות,</p> <p>אמר ר' שמעון בן לקיש בשעה שישראל חוטאין, יעקב מרגיש ממערת המכפלה, שנאמר כי עתה הזנית אפרים נטמא ישראל (הושע ה ג), וכן כשתבא השמחה והגאולה, יעקב שמח בה יותר מכל האבות, לפי שהוא מזומן לסעודה, שנאמר שמע אלי יעקב (עבדי) וישראל מקוראי (ישעיה מח יב), מה מקוראי, מזומניי, כמה דאת אמר ויתן להם מקום בראש הקרואים (שמואל א נט כב),</p> <p>ורב אמר משל למי שמשיא את בתו, מי שמח, לא אביה של כלה, שנאמר לכן כה אמר ה' אל בית יעקב אשר פדה את אברהם וגוי (ישעיה כט כב), הוי אומר כשתבא הגאולה לעולם לישראל, יעקב ישמח בה יותר מכל האבות, לכך</p>	<p>יגל יעקב ישמח ישראל</p> <p>לא היה צריך לומר אלא</p> <p>יגל אברהם יצחק ויעקב וישמחו ישראל,</p> <p>אלא למה יגל יעקב,</p> <p>לפי שיעקב מצטער כשישראל מצטערים וכשהם בצרה לפיכך כשתבוא הגאולה לישראל הוא שמח עמהם יגל יעקב ישמח ישראל, אימתי יגל יעקב, כשישמח ישראל,</p> <p>כשם שדרש ריש לקיש (דבר קשה הוא), כשישראל חוטאים כאן יעקב לוקה במערת המכפלה, לפיכך כשתבוא הגאולה הוא שמח עמהם יגל יעקב ישמח ישראל,</p> <p>אבל ר' אלכסנדר'י דריש דעת אחרת, למה יגל</p>

נאמר יגל יעקב ישמח ישראל.	יעקב, אלא אדם שיש לו בן למול או נטל אשה מי שמח, מי שהוא מזומן לסעודה, [וכן יעקב הוא מזומן לסעודת] הקדוש ברוך הוא שהוא עתיד [לעשות] לצדיקים לעתיד לבא שמע אלי ישראל מקוראי (ישעיה מ"ח י"ב) [מהו מקוראי] מזומני, לפיכך כשתבוא (סעודה) [סעודת] גאולה הוא שמח שהוא מזומן לסעודה יגל יעקב, אימתי כל אילו, כשיתקע שופר בציון שנאמר תקעו שופר בציון הריעו בהר קדשי [וגו'] כי בא יום ה' כי קרוב, כך דריש ר' תנחומא ב"ר.
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Pesiqta Rabbati 41

Another explanation of: *Who will give [etc.] and Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad* (Psalm 14.7). Should it not have said: ‘Abraham will rejoice and Isaac and Jacob will be glad (as well as) Israel?’ But why (does it say) *Jacob will rejoice*? Because Jacob suffers when Israel suffers and is in trouble. Therefore when the redemption comes to Israel, he is glad with them. *Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad*.

When will Jacob rejoice? When Israel will be glad, as Resh Laqish expounds (it is a difficult case). When Israel sins, then Jacob is affected in the cave of Machpelah. Therefore when the redemption comes, he will be glad with them. *Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad*.

But Rabbi Alexandri taught a different reason. Why will Jacob rejoice? (It may be compared to) A man who has a son to circumcise or when he marries, who rejoices? Someone that is invited to the feast

[and likewise Jacob is invited to the feast] which the Holy One blessed be He is going [to organize] for the righteous in the time to come. *Listen to me, oh My called* (Isaiah 48.12) [What is *My called*?] My invited. Therefore when the feast of the redemption comes, he will be glad for he has been invited to the feast. *Jacob will rejoice*.

When will all this be? When he will blow on the shofar on Zion, as has been said: *Blow the shofar on Zion and make a tremulous sound on My holy mountain [etc.] for the day of the Lord comes, for it is near* (Joel 2.1). Thus Rabbi Tanchuma expounded (this) in the name of Rabbi.

Comment

While the Pesiqta Rabbati and Midrash Tehillim are close parallels, with some difference in the order of the material, the effect they ought to have is different. Pesiqta Rabbati’s mashal has a father and son as main characters and its nimshal evokes the idea of a messanic banquet which will be attended by Israel’s righteous. Jacob, as one

of the invited to this feast will rejoice. The element of redemption is present, both in the nimshal and in the repetition of the lemma, Joel 2.1. Midrash Tehillim presents a father and his daughter in the mashal. While there are references to invited people, its main focus lies on the redemption and the joy that this will bring to Jacob and Israel.

Yalkut Psalms 663 also contains a parallel to 14.7. It seems that it has a combination of what the manuscripts offered.

ילקוט שמעוני תהילים רמז תרסג

יגל יעקב ישמח ישראל, יגל אברהם, ישמח יצחק, אין כתיב כאן, אלא יגל יעקב וגוי, למה יעקב שמח מכל האבות אמר ריש לקיש כשישראל חוטאין יעקב מרגיש במערת המכפלה, שנאמר כי עתה הזנית אפרים, נטמא ישראל במערת המכפלה, וכן כשתבא השמחה יעקב שמח בה מכל האבות. ד"א לפי שהוא מזומן לסעודה, שנאמר שמע אלי יעקב, וישראל מקוראי, מהו מקוראי מזומני, כמה דאת אמר ויתן לו מקום בראש הקרואים. ורב אמר משל למשיא בתו, מי שמח, לא אביה של כלה שנאמר כה אמר ה' אל בית יעקב אשר פדה את אברהם, הוי כשתבא הגאולה והישועה לישראל, יעקב ישמח יותר מכל האבות, לכן נאמר יגל יעקב, ישמח ישראל:

Parallels to Midrash Tehillim 17.9

The two inner parallels are found in 3.7 and in 10.6. The very short parallel in 3.7 comments on Psalm 3.8, one of the verses where God is asked to rise.

קומה ה' הושיעני אלהי. ר' פנחס בשם ר' הושעיא אמר חמש קימות ניבא דוד להקב"ה בספר תהלים ארבעה כנגד ארבע מלכיות, ואחד כנגד מלחמות גוג ומגוג.

The tradents are the same and so is the application to the four kingdoms and Gog and Magog. David's divine inspiration that made him see these future events is not mentioned, nor is there anything about the distress that is present in 17.9.

In 10.6, a comment on Psalm 10.12 that was also quoted in 17.9, a similar threatening role is ascribed to water. The beginning of the parasha reads:

קומה ה' אל נשא ידך. ר' יודן בשם ר' יהודה אמר אמרו ישראל לפני הקב"ה רבונו של עולם הגיעו הצרות על נפשנו כאדם שנשק עבים, פשוט ידך ודלינו

*Rise Lord, oh God, lift up Your hand*⁷. Rabbi Judan said in the name of Rabbi Jehuda: 'Israel said to the Holy One blessed be He: 'Master of the Universe (the) troubles have reached our lives, like a man who drowns in the sea. Stretch out Your hand and lift us up.'

Here the comparison to a man drowning in the sea illustrates the hazardous situation Israel is in. Buber suggests to change שִׁנְשַׁק עֲבִים 'who kisses the clouds', which makes no sense, into שִׁנְשַׁק בִּים. After this minor adjustment, placing the separation one letter later, the text reads 'who drowns in the sea', which is a strong image, like the idea of the strong man and his son crossing a river. The identity of the forces at work are different: they concern troubles which have been initiated during the days of the fourth kingdom.

The major external parallel is provided by Pesiqta Rabbati 31, which reads as follows.

פסיקתא רבתי (איש שלום) פרשה לא

דבר אחר ותאמר ציון עזבני ה' כך פתח רבי תנחומא ברי זשי"ה קומה ה' אל נשא ידיך אל תשכח ענוים (תהלים י יב), אמר ר' פנחס הכהן בשם רבי הושיעא חמש מעמדות אמר [דוד לפני] הקדוש ברוך הוא בספר תהלים בספר הראשון, קומה ה' הושיעני אלהי כי הכית את כל אויבי לחי ושני רשעים שברת (תהלים ג ח), קומה ה' באפך הנשא בעברות צררי ועורה אלי משפט צויתה (תהלים ז ז), [קומה ה' אל יעז אנוש וגו'] (תהלים ט כ), קומה ה' אל נשא ידיך (תהלים י יב), קומה ה' קדמה פניו הכריעהו (תהלים יז יג), למה (תחשה) [חמשה], אלא ארבעה (ארבעה) כנגד ארבע מלכיות, שראה דוד אותם ברוח הקודש היאך הם עתידים לשעבד את ישראל, והוא מעמיד את (הקודש) [הקב"ה] על [כל] אחת ואחת קומה ה', קומה ה', ולמה (תחשה) [חמשה], אלא רואה את מלכותו של גוג היאך היא באה בחזקה התחיל מעמיד הקב"ה עליה, ואומר רבשי"ע אינו שלנו (אלא) להזדווג (אל) [לה, אלא] את אפנטיסון לה קומה ה' קדמה פניו הכריעהו. מהו קומה ה' אל נשא ידיך משל לגיבור שהיה עובר בנהר ובנו עמו, היה הגיבור תופס בידו של בנו ומעבירו עמו, באה השיבולת לשטוף את הבן, אעפ"י כן היה אביו תופש בו, אלא שהיתה השיבולת עוברת על ראש הבן, התחיל הבן צועק מלמטון, אבא אילולי שאתה מחזיק בי כבר הייתי שטוף ביד השיבולת ומת, אלא מה הנייה שאני עומד ומתבלע במים, אלא אם תבקש אתה שאחיה הגבה ידיך ואני אחיה, כך היה דור /דוד/ רואה את המלכיות, שנמשלו כמים הוי המון עמים רבים כהמות מים יהמון וגו' (ישעיה יז יב) לכן הנה ה' מעלה עליכם את מי הנהר העצומים והרבים את מלך אשור ואת כל כבודו וגו' (ישעיהו ח ז), והוא רואה אותם היאך הם באות ומשעבדות את ישראל, התחיל צווח טבעתי ביון מצולה ואין מעמד באתי במעמקי מים ושבולת שטפתי (תהלים סט ג), ואילולי שאתה מחזיק בנו, שאתה מפיר את עצתם ממנו, כבר לא היה לנו עמידה לפניהם אפי' שעה אחת, אלא אם אתה מבקש שנחיה הגבה את ידיך ואנו חיים, הוא שנאמר קומה ה' אל נשא ידיך, אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא אני מגביה כי אשא אל שמים ידי (דברים לב מ).

Another explanation of Zion will say 'The Lord has deserted me' (Isaiah 49.14).

Thus opened Rabbi Tanchuma in the name of Rabbi: This should be read in the light of: *Rise, oh Lord, lift up Your hand, do not forget the meek* (Psalm 10.12). Rabbi Pinchas the priest said in the name of Rabbi Hoshaya: In the first book of the Psalms David made God rise five times. *Rise, oh Lord, rescue me my God, strike all my enemies on the jaw and break the teeth of the wicked* (Psalm 3.8). *Rise, oh Lord, in Your anger. Lift up against the outbursts of fury of my foes. Wake up, my God. Command judgment!* (Psalm 7.7). *Rise, oh Lord, do not let man prevail* (Psalm 9.20). *Rise, oh Lord, God lift up Your hand* (Psalm 10.12). *Rise, oh Lord, confront him and cause him to bow down.* (Psalm 17.12).

Why five? (But) four corresponding to four kingdoms which David saw through the Holy Spirit. (He saw) how they would enslave Israel and he made the Holy One blessed be He stand for every one of them. *Rise, oh Lord. Rise, oh Lord.* Why Five? (But) he saw the kingdom of Gog and Magog how it would come with strength and he made the Holy One blessed be He stand against it. He said: 'Master of the universe,

there is none of us to wage war against Gog and Magog³⁴¹, but You, meet Gog and Magog³⁴² in battle! *Rise, oh Lord, confront him and cause him to bow down.*

What is *Rise, oh Lord, God lift up Your hand*? It may be compared to a strong man who was crossing a river and his son was with him. The strong man was holding his son's hand and made him cross the river with him. The current came to drown the son, even though his father was holding him. Nevertheless the current passed over the head of the son. The son began to scream from below 'Father, if indeed you would not have seized me I would already have been drowned by the current. But if it pleases you that I stand and am swallowed by the current (so be it), but if you want that I will live, let your hand raise me and I will live.' Likewise David was seeing the kingdoms, which are compared to waters *Woe to a rushing of many peoples, like a rushing of rushing waters* (Isaiah 17.12). Therefore *Behold the Lord brings upon you the waters of the river, the mighty and many (waters), the king of Assyria and all his glory* (Isaiah 8.7). He saw them, how they would come and enslave Israel and he began to cry out: *I am sinking in deep mire and there is no standing. I have come to deep water and the current overflows me* (Psalm 69.3). If You had not seized his son³⁴³, for You thwarted their counsel from him. We already had no standing before them (not) even one hour, but if You want that we will live, raise Your hand and we will be alive. It says: *Rise, oh Lord, God lift up Your hand.* The Holy One blessed be He said: 'I raise My hand, for I lift up My hand to heaven' (Deuteronomy 32.4).

As the words פתח and פתח suggest, the overall structure of this part of Pesiqta Rabbati 31 is that of a petichah. The main verse of this pisqa is Isaiah 49.11 *Zion will say: 'The Lord has forsaken me and the Lord has forgotten me.'* After the second explanation, a parallel to Midrash Tehillim 17.10, Isaiah 49.11 is quoted again.

Pesiqta Rabbati narrows down the instances where God is asked "to rise" to the first book of Psalms. Besides their location these instances also have in common that they say קומה יהוה, and not אלהים, as is the case in for example Psalm 74.22. The risings are called מעמדות, which looks like the עמידות that Vatican 76, Trinity College Cambridge F18.39 and Paris have. Unlike Midrash Tehillim this text quotes the five instances and some of them are given more attention later on in the passage. Instead of the word שליט 'ruler, commander' the word אפנטוסון is found. According to Jastrow and Buber this comes from the Greek word απαντησον that has the meaning of 'meeting some, possible with hostile intentions', which would indeed be someone who initiates battle.

In the mashal more differences emerge, while thus far the two versions were rather congruous. What distinguishes the Pesiqta Rabbati version from Midrash Tehillim is the longwinded monologue by the son who leaves the decision to rescue him with his father and the different phraseology that is used throughout the mashal. In Midrash Tehillim elements from the biblical quotes in the nimshal are woven into the mashal,

³⁴¹ Literally 'her'.

³⁴² Literally 'her'.

³⁴³ It would be better to read בנך, 'Your son'.

thus establishing a firm structure and arousing a sense of recognition with the audience. In Pesiqta Rabbati 31 these repetitions occur sparsely and most of these instances are on the verb שטף 'to overflow' from Psalm 69. In Pesiqta Rabbati the biblical quotes form an important part of the nimshal and they tell of the situation Israel is in.

The theological perspective as displayed in the monologue is the fact that the father (God) has avoided immediate drowning places him in a position that he can decide whether he will give further assistance. The son seems to placidly accept whatever the decision will be. In the nimshal an invisible shift from David to Israel takes place and it is Israel that places its life in God's hands. Israel appears to be more eager to survive than the son of the mashal and really encourages God to rise and take action.

These two texts have definitely elements in common and the most logical explanation is that Pesiqta Rabbati and Midrash Tehillim have different versions of a teaching on five risings that did include a mashal on a strong man and his son. The style and the words that are used in the mashal diverge too much to assume a dependency of one text upon the other, although it seems that the internal coherence in Pesiqta Rabbati 31 has some problems. This pisqa continuously contrasts Zion's feeling of being forsaken and forgotten with the Lord's deeds and words. The time wherein this is to be situated varies, but in the two previous sections the era of the Babylonian exile seemed to be addressed. In this section Zion plays no role of importance and the explanation and the mashal seem to be out of place. Pesiqta Rabbati gives a parallel to the beginning of Midrash Tehillim 17.10 after the mashal of the strong man, but it ends where Midrash Tehillim comes with another explanation on Psalm 17. It is only the quoting of Isaiah 49.14 that follows the partial parallel of Midrash Tehillim 17.10 that ties this part to Zion.

The last parallel is Yalkut Psalms 650³⁴⁴

ילקוט שמעוני תהילים רמז תרנ

קומה ה' אל נשא ידך, א"ר יודן, בש"ר יהודה אמרו ישראל לפני הקב"ה, הגיענו צרות עד נפשנו, כאדם שנשקע במים, ואומר לחברו פשוט ידיך ודלני. משל לגבור עובר בנהר ובנו עמו, וגבור תופס ביד בנו ומעבירו, באת השבולת לשטוף את הבן, אעפ"כ הבן תפוס באביו, כיון שהיתה השבולת עוברת על ראש הבן, התחיל הבן צועק מלמטה, אבא, אילולא שאתה מחזיקני, כבר הייתי שטוף בשבולת, אלא מה הנייה שאני עומד ומתבלע במים, אם מבקש אתה שאחיה הגבה ידיך " כך אמר דוד כשראה המלכיות שנמשלו למים, שנאמר הוי המון עמים רבים כהמות ימים לכן הנה ה' מעלה את מי הנהר וגוי, התחיל צווח טבעתי ביוון מצולה ואין מעמד וגוי, ושבלת שטפתי, אלמלא שאתה מחזיק בנו ומפר עצתם, כבר לא היה לנו עמידה שעה אחת, ואם אתה מבקש שנחיה, הגבה ידך. קומה ה' אל נשא ידך, אמר הקב"ה, אני מגביהה כי אשא אל שמים ידי :

The Yalkut version is almost an exact copy of Pesiqta Rabbati 31. The context differs because the Yalkut wants to comment solely on Psalm 1.12, while the teaching on the five risings played an important role in the Rabbati passage.

³⁴⁴ The reference in the Yalkut on Psalm 17 to remez 615 seems incorrect.

Parallel to Midrash Tehillim 20.1

The only parallel is formed by Yalkut Psalms remez 679.

ילקוט שמעוני תהילים רמז תרעט

יענך ה' ביום צרה. זה שאמר הכתוב יקראני ואענהו עמו אנכי בצרה. אמר הקב"ה בשעה שמגעת צרה לישראל, והם מבקשים אותי ויהיו משתפין כבודי עמהם, באותה שעה אני עונה אותם, שנאמר יקראני ואענהו, למה עמו אנכי בצרה א"ר יודן משל למה הדבר דומה, לאשה עוברה שהיה לה כעס עם אמה, ועלתה אמה למעלה, ובשעת לידתה היתה צווחת מלמטה, והיתה אמה שומעת קולה מלמעלה והיתה אף היא צווחת כנגדה, והיו שכנותיה אומרות לה מה טוביך וכי את יולדת עמה! אמרה להם בתי יולדת בצער, אע"פ שהכעיסה לי איני יכולה לסבול צווחתה, אלא הריני צווחת עמה, לפי שצרת בתי שלי הוא"כ כשחרב ביהמ"ק, באה קול בכיה ויללה בכל העולם כלו, שנאמר ויקרא ה' אלהים צבאות ביום ההוא וגו', אמרו מלאכי השרת לפני הקב"ה רבש"ע, וכי יש לפניך דברים הללו, והכתיב הוד והדר לפניו עוז וחדוה במקומו, א"ל בתי נחרב, ובני שלולין בקולרין, ואיני מצר! לא כך, כתבתי להם עמו אנכי בצרה. ועתה מה לי פה נאם ה' כי לקח עמי חנם,

The words *משתעין* and *הוא* in the mother's answer show two writing errors that are also found in Florence. However, there are too many points on which these two texts differ so that dependence of the Yalkut on Florence, or vice versa, can be ruled out.

Parallels to Midrash Tehillim 20.4

There is no parallel to the mashal on the cemetery, but there are two parallels to the second mashal. The first parallel is Deuteronomy Rabbah (Wilna) 2.11 that has Psalm 20.1 as lemma. It is in the second explanation of this verse that the parallel surfaces.

ד"א יענך ה' ביום צרה מהו ביום צרה אמר ר"ל למה הדבר דומה לאשה שישבה על המשבר לילד והיתה מצטערת לילד אמרו מי שענה את אמך הוא יענה אותך כך אמר דוד לישראל מי שענה ליעקב הוא יענה אתכם מה התפלל יעקב ואעשה שם מזבח לאל העונה אותי ביום צרתי אף אתה יענך ה' ביום צרה ישגבך שם אלהי יעקב אמר משה לפני הקב"ה רבש"ע כשתהא רואה בניך בצער ואין מי שיבקש רחמים עליהם מיד ענה אותן אמר לו הקב"ה משה חייך בכל שעה שיקראו אותי אני אענה אותם דכתיב (דברים ד) כה' אלהינו בכל קראנו אליו.

Another explanation of *May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble* (Psalm 20.1). Resh Laqish said: What does the case resemble? It may be compared to a woman that was sitting on the travailing chair to give birth and who was in pain to give birth. They said to her: 'May He who answered your mother, answer you.' Likewise said David to Israel: 'May He who answered Jacob, answer you.' What did Jacob pray? *And I will make an altar there to God who answered me* (Genesis 35.3) in the day of trouble. You too *May He answer you in the day of pain and may the name of the God of Jacob be exalted* (Psalm 20.2). Moses said to the Holy One blessed be He: 'Master of the universe, when You see Your children in pain and there is no one who can seek mercy for them, answer them immediately!' The Holy One blessed be He said to him: 'Moses, by your life, any time they will call Me, I will answer them as has been written: *as the Lord your God is, whenever we call upon Him* (Deuteronomy 4.7).

Resh Laqish, the tradent whose name is also recorded like this in some manuscripts on Midrash Tehillim 20.4, presents a mashal in Hebrew. He provides some details on the travailing woman, who is said to sit on a המשבר, a travailing chair. The bystanders say a few words, just enough to be used in the nimshal. Midrash Tehillim had the bystanders speak Aramaic and their wish seemed to be the result of an inability to find other comforting words.

In the nimshal the two parallels diverge even more. Deuteronomy Rabbah has a role for both David and Moses. David, the author of the Psalm, can console Israel with the example of Jacob, whose day of pain seemed to have taken place while journeying to Bethel. He addressed God by means of prayer and received an answer. Moses, who uttered the words of Deuteronomy 4.7, acts as intercessor for Israel, pleading with God to answer Israel even without an intercessor. That Moses' wish is granted, can be deduced from Deuteronomy 4.7. In Midrash Tehillim the focus was on Jacob who was answered and the issue of intercession plays no role.

Yalkut Psalms remez 680 forms the second parallel.

ילקוט שמעוני תהילים רמז תרפ

דבר אחר יענך ה' ביום צרה, משל למה הדבר דומה, לאב ובן שהיו מהלכין בדרך, נתיגע הבן, אמר לאביו אבא, היכן היא המדינה אמר לו בני, סימן זה יהא בידך, אם ראית בית הקברות לפניך הרי המדינה קרובה לך " כך הנביא אומר לישראל אם ראית הצרות שיכסו אתכם, מיד אתם נגאלים, שנאמר יענך ה' ביום צרה. ישגבך שם אלהי יעקב, אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק אין כתיב כאן, אלא אלהי יעקב, ולמה משל לאשה עוברה שהיתה מקשה לילד, א"ל לית אנן ידעין מה נאמר, אלא מאן דעני לאמך בעדן קשותא הוא יעני יתיך " אף כאן נאמר ביעקב לאל העונה אותי ביום צרתי, א"ל דוד לישראל מי שענה לישראל אביכם בעת צרתו, הוא יענה אתכם בעת צרתכם, הוי יענך ה' ביום צרה ישגבך שם אלהי יעקב

This parallel hardly differs from what is found in the manuscripts. For some reason the figure who addresses Israel, in Midrash Tehillim this is David, is called הנביא. His identity is not revealed. No signs of affiliation with Deuteronomy Rabbah can be discerned, so the most likely candidate is David. The teaching on Jacob's strength is not present.

Parallels to Midrash Tehillim 22.12

The three parallels comment on Song of Songs 6.10 and are found in Songs of Songs Rabbah (Wilna only) 6.10 and 6.12 and in the Yalkut on Song of Songs 992.

The beginning of Song of Songs Rabbah 6.10, not quoted here, resembles the text found in Midrash Tehillim 22.13 on the two Rabbis who see the dawn and it speaks of the redemption that slowly progresses. Many derashot on Psalm 22 are connected to the Persian period and the example that is given is indeed related to Mordechai and Esther. In Song of Songs Rabbah Esther 8.16, that in Midrash Tehillim 22.13 is the closing verse, is regarded as an opportunity to lead the exposition back to Song of Songs 6.10. Here the verse is used to weaken the idea that Israel is like a dawn without a shade.

(כמו שחר, אי מה שחר זה שאין לו צל יכול אף ישראל כן) ת"ל יפה כלבנה, אי מה הלבנה הזו אין אורה ברור כך ישראל, ת"ל ברה כחמה, הה"ד (שופטים ה') ואוהביו כצאת השמש בגבורתו, אי מה החמה קופחת, יכול אף ישראל כן ת"ל יפה כלבנה הה"ד (תהלים ל"ו) מה יקר חסדך אלהים, אי מה לבנה זו פעמים חסרה פעמים יתירה, יכול אף ישראל כן ת"ל ברה כחמה, אי מה חמה זו משמשת ביום ואינה משמשת בלילה, יכול אף ישראל כן ת"ל יפה כלבנה, מה לבנה זו משמשת ביום ובלילה דכתיב בה (בראשית א') ולמשול ביום ובלילה, כך ישראל הן הן בעולם הזה הן הן לעולם הבא, אי מה חמה ולבנה אין להם אימה, יכול אף ישראל כן, ת"ל איומה כנדגלות

Scripture says: *Beautiful like the moon* (Song of Songs 6.10) Someone might think that Israel is like the moon whereof the light is not clear. Scripture says: *Bright as the sun* (Song of Songs 6.10). This is what has been written: *His beloved are like the sunset in its strength* (Judges 5.31). The sun strikes, is it possible that Israel does likewise? Scripture says: *beautiful like the moon*. This is what has been written: *How precious is Your kindness* (Psalm 36.8). Someone might think that Israel is possibly like this moon that at times wanes and at times is plentiful. Scripture says: *bright like the sun*. Someone might think that Israel is possibly like the sun that shines during the day, but does not shine during the night. Scripture says: *beautiful like the moon*. Like this moon shines during the day and during the night, as has been written: *to rule during the day and during the night* (Genesis 1.18) likewise Israel indeed (rules) in this world and in the world to come. Someone might think that Israel is possibly like the sun and the moon that do not have awe. Scripture says: *Terrible like banners*.

The darshan of this parallel demonstrates the complementarity of the elements that form Song of Songs 6.10. It contains different facets that, when taken together, describes Israel. The synergy that exists between these elements guarantees that nothing bad can be said of Israel since every possible negative aspect is countered by a positive element. This play around the sun and the moon is not present in Midrash Tehillim. Instead the line of thought is progressing and does not dwell on the negative and the positive sides, but simply uses what is needed to demonstrate that Israel is rich in good deeds.

It is in Song of Songs Rabbah (Wilna) 6.12 that a parallel to the mashal on the princess is present.

לא ידעתי נפשי שמתני, תני ר' חייא משל לבת מלכים שהיתה מלקטת בשלפים, נמצא המלך עובר והכיר שהיא בתו, שלח אוהבו נטלה והושיבה עמו בקרונין, והיו חברותיה תמהות עליה ואומרות, אתמול הייתה מלקטת בשלפים והיום יושבת בקרונין עם המלך, אמרה להם כשם שאתם תמהות עלי כך אני תמהה על עצמי, וקראת על עצמה לא ידעתי נפשי שמתני, כך כשהיו ישראל במצרים משועבדין בטיט ולבנים והיו מאוסין ובזויין בעיני המצריים, וכשנעשו בני חורין ונגאלו ונעשו סגנים על כל באי עולם, והיו אומות העולם תמהות ואומרות אתמול הייתם עובדים בטיט ולבנים והיום נעשיתם בני חורין וסגנים על כל העולם, והיו ישראל אומרים להם כשם שאתם תמהים עלינו כך אנו תמהים על עצמנו, וקראו על עצמן לא ידעתי נפשי שמתני, ד"א לא ידעתי נפשי שמתני, ביוסף הצדיק הכתוב מדבר, אתמול (תהלים ק"ה) ענו בכבל רגלו ברזל באה נפשו, והיום (בראשית מ"ב) ויוסף הוא השליט על הארץ, וקרא על עצמו לא ידעתי נפשי שמתני

I did not know... my soul had put me (in the chariots of Ammi Nadib) (Song of Songs 6.12)

Rabbi Chiyya taught: It may be compared to a princess who was gleaning among the ears. The king happened to pass by and he recognized her as his daughter. He sent his friend, he³⁴⁵ took her up and he made her sit with him in the coach. Her friends were astonished about her and said: 'Yesterday you were gleaning among the ears and today you are sitting in a coach with the king'. She said to them: 'Just like you are astonished about me, so am I astonished about myself.' She³⁴⁶ read about herself *I did not know (myself)... You have placed my soul.*

Likewise (was it) when Israel was in Egypt when they were enslaved with clay and stones. They were despised and they were loathed in the eyes of the Egyptians. And when they were (made) free men and when they were redeemed, they were made chiefs over all that walks on the earth. The nations of the world were astonished at them and said: 'Yesterday you were slaves in clay and stones and today you have been made free men and chiefs over all the world. Israel said to them: 'Just like you are astonished about us, so are we astonished about ourselves.' They read about themselves *I did not know (myself)... You have placed my soul.*

The manuscripts on Midrash Tehillim differed on a number of occasions. One of these was the question if the princess was the daughter of the king who recognized her or that she was a princess that was not related to the king. The word אהבה, might have been the reason for this confusion. According to the parallel of Song of Songs Rabbah the princess was indeed his daughter. It is not written here that the king loved the princess, but that he אהבו. There is too much resemblance with אהבה, to regard this as a coincidence. In my opinion the introduction of the friend is used to avoid confusion about the relationship between the king and the princess.

The majority of manuscripts of Midrash Tehillim did not mention the role of פחות and they also chose the combination טיט and לבנים. This parallel seems to have received the same tradition. Songs of Songs Rabbah has almost projected the entire structure of the mashal onto the nimshal; only the discovery of Israel is not implemented into the nimshal. In Midrash Tehillim the comments by the Egyptians are not present.

Yalkut Song of Songs 992

ילקוט שמעוני שיר השירים רמז תתקצב

יפה כלבנה מה הלבנה ביום ובלילה כך ישראל שולטים בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא יכול כלבנה יהיו חסרים, תלמוד לומר ברה כחמה מה חמה שלמה כך היו ישראל מלאים במצות איומה כנדגלות, רבי אלעזר ורבי יהושע, ר' אלעזר אומר כמלאכי השרת שהם עומדים דגלים דגלים, ר' יהושע אומר כיציאתן ממצרים שהיו עומדים דגלים דגלים, תני ר' חייא משל לבת מלכים שהיתה מלקטת בשלפין, והמלך עובר והכירה שהיא בתו ונטלה והושיבה עמו בקרונין והיו חברותיה תמהות עליה ואומרות אתמול היית מלקטת בשלפין והיום את יושבת בקרונין עם המלך, אמרה להן כשם שאתן תמהות עלי כך אני תמהה על עצמי, כך כשהיו ישראל משועבדים בטיט ולבנים היו מאוסין בעיניהן של מצריים וכשנגאלו נעשו חורין וסגנים על באי עולם, והיו תמהים והיו ישראל

³⁴⁵ The king.

³⁴⁶ This actually is a perfect second person feminine.

אומרים להם אף אנו תמהים עלינו כשם שאתם תמהים, ויותר מכם אנו תמהים שנאמר לא ידעתי
נפשי שמתני

The Yalkut follows Midrash Tehillim, not Songs of Songs Rabbah. The manuscripts of Midrash Tehillim also differed on the number of expositions on the moon and the sun, as well as on the banners. The Yalkut follows the numbers of Parma. There are two deviations in the mashal. First of all the word אהבה has been left out so that there can be no mistake about the king and his daughter. Secondly the Yalkut says that Israel was enslaved to טיט and לבנים, which was found in the majority of manuscripts and is also congruous with Songs of Songs Rabbah.

Parallels to Midrash Tehillim 105.11

In Midrash Tehillim 114.1 is an inner-parallel to the mashal about the donkey and the corpulent man is present. While 105.11 contains Aramaic, the text of 114.1 is rendered in Hebrew.

מדרש תהלים קיד א

בצאת ישראל ממצרים. זהו שאמר הכתוב שמח מצרים בצאתם (תהלים קה לח), אמר ר' ברכיה משל לבעל בשר שהיה רוכב על החמור, זה אומר מתי ארד מן החמור, וזה אומר מתי ירד זה מעלי, הגיע זמן שירד, ואיני יודע מי שמח ביותר, כיון שראה דוד היאך היו שמחים בצאתם ממצרים, התחיל מקלס על יציאת מצרים, ואומר בצאת ישראל ממצרים.

This parallel is certainly of a lesser quality and is inspired by 105.11. Paris contains a clear cross reference to Psalm 105. Parma and Cambridge have the complete text, but even they do not have a complete mashal because the nimshal's protasis and in part also the apodosis are missing. The crux of the mashal that was so clear in 105.11, namely the idea that not the oppressed, but the oppressor was the one that was most glad is totally missed. This parallel argues the exact opposite and says that Israel was the most glad. This vision is voiced by all the manuscripts. Florence, Vatican 76 and 81, Frankfurt, Trinity F18.39 and Paris only give the beginning of the mashal and the וכו' suggests to look elsewhere in Midrash Tehillim.

Yalkut Psalms 863 is the only external parallel to this mashal.

ילקוט שמעוני תהלים רמז תתסג

שמח מצרים בצאתם. א"ר ברכיה משל לבעל בשר שהיה רוכב על חמור חמרא מסכי אימת יחות ליה מיניה, ואיהו מסכי אימת ניחות מן חמרא, כיון דנחת ליה מן חמרא שרי גברא חדי ושרי חמרא חדי ולית אן ידעין מאן חדי סגי מנהון, כך כשהיו ישראל במצרים היו המכות באות על המצרים והיו המצריים מקוים מתי יצאו ישראל ממצרים, וישראל מקוים מתי יגאלם הקב"ה, וכיון שנגאלו התחילו אלו ואלו שמחים ואין אנו יודעים מי שמח יותר, וממה שאמר דוד אנו יודעין שהמצריים שמחו יותר מישראל

The Yalkut clearly has a mixture of what is represented by the manuscripts. The beginning of the mashal resembles Parma and Cambridge, in particular the Aramaic

part. The word שרי is used twice; this is not found in any of the manuscripts and it does not seem to fit in. The first observation that we do not know who was more happy uses the plural, this is only done in Paris. In the nimshal more of the remaining manuscripts surfaces, such as the hope of the Egyptians, the wording ואלו שמחים and התחילו אלו ואלו and ממה שאמר דוד.

Parallel to Midrash Tehillim 118.13

There is a parallel to the mashal of the prudent king in Midrash Hallel which can be found on page 108 of Jellineks' Beth HaMidrash. The first two comments are not entirely identical to our passage. The text of the mashal is as follows:

משל למך שנכנסו עליו גנבים והיה המלך פיקח מאד אמר אם אני עומד עליהם עכשיו הם אומרים מה מצא בידינו אלא יודע אני בהם שהם עתידין לחזור שתיים ושלוש פעמים ואז אני הורגן כך המלך זה הקב"ה הגנים אלו אומות העולם שנא' ואספתי את כל הגוים לירושלים למלחמה ונלכדה העיר זו המתחרת ונשמו הבתים זו הבתים והנשים תשכבנו אלו עריות ויצא חצי העיר בגולה זה השביה והקב"ה יוצא ונלחם עמהם זני ויצא ה' ונלחם בגוים ההם וגוי ומשלח בהם מגפה ומשייר מהם פליטים שנא' ושלחתי מהם פליטים וכו' לכך נאמר בשם ה' כי אמילם

The wording of the mashal is very close to that of Midrash Tehillim. At the end there is a deviation that is caused by quoting Isaiah 66.19. This makes the plague milder because it says that God's glory will be spread among the nations, which presupposes that they are alive. This verse is not treated at all in Midrash Tehillim.

The combination שנים ושלוש פעמים שתיים ושלוש פעמים is only found in Florence that has שנים ושלוש פעמים. However, there are too many differences between this manuscript and Beth HaMidrash to assume a connection between the two.

Excursus Midrash Hallel and Midrash Tehillim

Beth HaMidrash (Jellinek) contains among others Midrash Hallel, a Midrash on the six Psalms that form the so-called full Hallel (113-118). These Psalms were read during the major festivals of Pesach, Sukkot, Shavuot and also Chanukkah. In the beginning of the work a connection is made to the high holidays, but this association is lacking in the remainder of the work. Midrash Hallel is characterized by the fact that it tries to comment on all the verses of a Psalm, unlike Midrash Tehillim that usually comments on the first verses of a Psalm. The work contains many straightforward king-meshalim that are mostly anonymous. Despite this preference for meshalim not all of the meshalim that are present in Midrash Tehillim 113-118 can be found in Midrash Hallel. In the beginning of Midrash Hallel the comments are more or less independent of Midrash Tehillim, although it sometimes uses parts of Midrash Tehillim that do not belong to the Hallel Psalms. However, towards the end of the work the text is almost an exact copy of Midrash Tehillim. The theme of redemption is barely present in Midrash Hallel. Midrash Tehillim has linked Psalm 113 to stories about a desperate Pharaoh who urges Moses and Aaron to lead Israel out of Egypt. Midrash Hallel has not used one element of this theme in 113 and also in the other comments the call for redemption is hardly a dominant factor.

According to M.D. Herr³⁴⁷ the redaction of this work took place around the tenth century or later. The mashal of 114.1, on the fat man and the donkey, is missing in Midrash Hallel. Up to that point Midrash Hallel seems to have its own agenda, which may be the reason why this mashal is missing.

³⁴⁷ Encyclopaedia Judaica, 'Smaller Midrashim', Jerusalem, 1997 (CD Rom)

Appendix C Scriptural verses quoted in the selected meshalim

I Scriptural verses that function as pericope verse (P) or petichah (p) verse

Zechariah	Passage
7.13	10.2 (p)

Psalms	
6.3	6.4 (P)
6.4	6.5 (P)
10.1	10.1 (P), 10.2 (P)
11.1	11.1 (P)
14.7	14.6 (P), 14.7 (P)
17.12	17.9 (P)
20.1	20.1 (P)
20.2	20.1 (P), 20.4 (P)
91.15	20.1 (p)
105.38	105.11 (P)
118.6	11.1 (p)
118.10	118.13 (P)

Song of Songs	
6.10	22.2 (P)

Daniel	
7.25	10.1 (P)

II Other verses quoted

Genesis

35.3 20.4

Exodus

15.3 11.1

19.6 10.1

Leviticus

19.2 10.1

Numbers

11.29 14.6

Deuteronomy

5.26 14.6

7.7 10.1

28.1 10.1

32.4 17.9

33.2 10.1

I Samuel

9.22 14.7

Isaiah	
2.3	14.6
5.7	10.1
17.12	17.9
22.12	20.1
29.22	14.7
41.4	118.13
43.2	17.9
48.12	14.7
52.5	20.1
55.6	10.2
63.4	14.6
65.1	10.2
Jeremiah	
3.14	10.2
3.22	10.2
Ezekiel	
36.26	14.6
Hosea	
5.3	14.7
5.15	10.2
Joel	
3.1	14.6

Zechariah

12.5	118.13
12.6	118.13
14.1	118.13
14.2	118.13
14.3	118.13
14.12	118.13

Psalms

10.12	17.9
17.12	17.9
20.3	14.6
50.2	14.6
53.7	14.6
69.3	17.9
69.16	17.9
85.5	14.6
91.15	6.4
99.2	14.6
118.11	118.13
118.12	118.13
128.5	14.6
132.14	11.1
133.3	14.6
134.4	14.6

Proverbs

27.8 11.1

Song of Songs

6.12 22.12

Daniel

7.25 10.2

I Chronicles

16.27 20.1

Appendix D - Index of Sources

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